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DESPERATE REMEDIES

MR. Lawther, in his presidential address to the National Union of Mineworkers this week, used the words "industrial catastrophe" to describe what is bound to happen next winter if things go on as at present. Nothing but a drastic change of policy on the part of the Minister of Fuel and Power and a change of attitude on the part of the miners can avert this catastrophe. Unless the number of men at the coal face can be immediately increased and the weekly wastage of manpower halted, we are now faced with the calculable certainty that deficiencies in the supply of coal, gas and electricity will slowly but steadily paralyse industry as the winter goes on. We must satisfy the demands of a rapidly expanding economy; and to achieve this Mr. Shinwell must not merely avoid a fall in production but steadily increase it, in order to prevent unemployment throughout British industry.

One striking figure was quoted by Mr. Lawther. In the first quarter of 1946, just under 3,000 juveniles entered the mining industry. During the same period no less than 16,670 men retired from it. This appalling rate of wastage may be disguised this year by the return of soldiers from the Forces and the recruitment of ex-miners in other industries, but these sources of recruitment will last only for a few months and will not recur. From now on the mining industry must rely on juvenile recruitment to maintain its manpower. We need 60,000 a year: we are getting 12,000; and this at a time when our stocks are down by over 6 million tons compared with last year, and 8½ million tons compared with 1944.

It is impossible to exaggerate the effect of a failure of coal supplies next winter. Our export drive would be brought to a halt. The Government would be stricken past recovery. Moreover, it would be said that national disaster, affecting rich and poor alike, had been caused by the failure of the first nationalised industry.

This imminent national disaster was the spectre which darkened the miners' conference at Bridlington and gave special significance to the attitude of Mr. Lawther and Mr. Shinwell. Strangely enough, neither of them referred, except in passing, to the one obvious and immediate measure which might avert industrial catastrophe: the use on a large scale of imported foreign labour. There are a few thousand experienced ex-miners in the Polish Army, and among the displaced persons rotting away in the camps in Germany. There are tens of thousands of juveniles among the "displaced persons," ready and eager to come to this country and be trained to take their place in the mines.

But the miners' leaders are extremely suspicious of any ambitious plans for the employment of foreign labour in the mines. It is stated that some of them would prefer German prisoners to Polish soldiers because the Germans would ultimately return to Germany whereas the Poles would stay in England.

We must understand the reasons for the miners' hesitancy. The Reid Report showed that, in a fully rationalised industry—and the miners assume that our nationalised coal industry *will* be fully rationalised—a labour force of some 600,000 miners will be required. The real trouble, they argue, is not so much that we have too few miners, but that our miners are inefficiently distributed, inefficiently employed and far too old. Thus any large increase in the total number of miners might bring with it, after the Coal Board had reorganised the mines, a genuine threat of unemployment. The Minister of Fuel and Power has given guarantees which fully cover this danger, but the miners' fears are so deeply inbred that they cannot be removed by promises. Mr. Shinwell has been reluctant to push the Federation too far. He has suggested an experiment with a few hundred Polish ex-soldiers, but nothing more. Apparently, he and the Federation pin their faith to improved methods of recruitment, which are already having some effect; and to the amelioration of working conditions by such measures as the five-day week. These, not foreign labour, they argue, are the proper remedies. And they can point to recent output figures as giving some ground for optimism.

The miners' argument, however, completely fails to deal with the gap between juvenile recruitment and retirement figures. To maintain even a total force of 600,000 miners, as against the present total of just under 700,000 a vastly larger juvenile intake is required than is available from British sources. We believe that Mr. Shinwell and Mr. Lawther, while stimulating British recruitment by every means, should consider the possibility of filling the gap by juvenile recruitment from the displaced persons' camps, limiting the recruitment of experienced ex-miners of mature years to the Polish Army. From the latter source they will obtain only a few thousand men: whereas the former is a reservoir from which they can draw without reserve. For the juvenile D.P., unlike the Polish soldier, need not be promised citizenship or a permanent domicile: he comes here as a temporary foreign worker.

A tenderness for traditional suspicions should not blind Mr. Shinwell and Mr. Lawther to the main issue. If, for whatever reason, the Socialist Minister of Fuel and Power and the President of the N.U.M. refuse to adopt the desperate remedies demanded by the crisis, they will become personally responsible for industrial paralysis and unemployment next winter. No one will bother to analyse the reasons for their failure. The British people, without work in the factory and without fires in the home, will only remember that the Labour Government and the Miners' Federation between them, refused to draft into the mines the Polish soldiers, the boys in the displaced persons' camps and the German prisoners who could have helped us out in the critical period ahead.

The Government cannot attempt to compel the miners to accept foreign workers in the mines. Such compulsion might well decrease the amount of coal mined by British miners. The responsibility for the decision must rest with the mineworkers themselves, and it is Mr. Shinwell's task to convince them of the nation's need.

A New French Government

After three weeks of negotiations, M. Bidault has managed to form a Cabinet which may hold together until the next elections. While retaining the post of Foreign Minister, M. Bidault will also be responsible for the Ministry of Information. The Communists have gained one portfolio at the expense of the Socialists, who no longer have M. Phillip at the Ministry of Finance. All the same, the Communists have not been given all the posts they wanted: they have most of the social and economic Ministries, but the key Ministries of Finance and National Economy are allotted to the M.R.P. The condition of Communist participation was M. Bidault's agreement to certain wage increases, even though he was not prepared to accept the Trade Union demand for an all-round advance of 25 per cent. The compromise stipulates that the increases shall not entail a gross charge on the Exchequer of more than 15 per cent. of present rates. The new Government is certain to raise family allowances in the near future, and the other increases will be confined as far as possible to the lowest wage and salary groups. There are very good grounds of hardship for grading-up wages, but the danger of inflation remains serious. Strict price control may do something to offset wage increases, but the only real solution is a rapid production of all goods at present in short supply. Whether this Government, which remains provisional, can do it is another matter. The best hope for France is for all parties to expedite the passage of a new constitutional draft which is likely to be endorsed by referendum and which can put an end to the instability and recurring crises of a coalition whose members work always with one eye on impending elections.

The Mission Returns

Faced with a last-minute failure to secure agreement on the composition of an Interim Government, the Cabinet Mission is returning home, leaving the Viceroy to form a caretaker Cabinet of officials. Both Congress and the Muslim League have agreed on the long-term plan, and the Mission seems confident that both parties will share in the drafting of a constitution for India. The new deadlock arose as a result of a Congress demand that one of its representatives should be a Congress Muslim. The Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission may well feel aggrieved that Congress should raise this controversial issue when the negotiations were nearly over, while Mr. Jinnah, who wishes to make himself leader of all Indian Muslims, vehemently objects. But it is, after all, for Congress—which has always included Muslims—to pick its own representatives. While the Mission does not return with the laurels its patience and ability have earned, to obtain agreement on the constitutional issue is a real achievement, and, for the rest, communal rivalry must be held responsible.

Burma

The Debate last Friday and the Amendments tabled for the Debate on the Burma Legislature Bill suggest that Burma is no longer considered only a poor relation of her Indian neighbour. The Debate included well-informed and constructive speeches by Tom Driberg and Mr. Rees-Williams, the latter having just visited Burma as the Labour Member of the South-East Asia Delegation. He pleaded with the Government for a new approach to the Far East, now politically adolescent, turbulent and changing, and he was supported by other experienced Members, including Mr. Tom Reid, Col. Hamilton and Mr. Godfrey Nicholson. India is a warning of the dangers of failure to meet the demand for political independence; a policy of drift is already seen in outbreaks of lawlessness, and in the growth of popular mistrust. Our motives are alike suspect when we offer financial support needed to rebuild this devastated country and when the Burma Legislature makes elaborate plans for elections next spring. The Labour Government can still prevent a calamity in Burma, and it can show good faith by accepting the proposed franchise Amendments. A Parliamentary delegation to Burma might undo much of the harm created by the present Legislative Council of returned exiles from New Delhi and create the conditions for the future co-operation of the Anti-Fascist People's Independence League, now admittedly the only effectively organised movement in the country.

Denmark and South Slesvig

At the end of the war, the Danish Government declared that it did not desire to adjust the frontier with Germany, although there is a substantial Danish minority in Holstein and South Slesvig. But the continued arrival of Germans in these two provinces, mainly from East Prussia and Pomerania, has caused considerable uneasiness in Denmark, where half a million people have signed a petition calling for a revision of the southern frontier. In South Slesvig, immigrants already outnumber the 300,000 inhabitants, who regard them as embarrassing guests and who would like to see some of them transferred to the French and American Zones, if the British cannot find room for them elsewhere. Were it not for the mass of immigrants, the Danish minority—which is organised to the tune of fifty thousand in the *Slesvigsk Forening*, would be in a fairly strong position. It already has a hundred and eighteen schools open, as compared with nine under the Nazis. A plebiscite, however, would have to be conducted with care since, under present conditions, the immigrants are entitled to vote after one year's residence; after two years, they are able to stand as candidates at elections. The Danes are now uneasy about this pressure of German population on their frontier and it is possible that the Government—with, it is said, Russian backing—may present a request for modifications which would bring most of the Danish minority back inside Denmark.

Empire Science

A timely stocktaking of the scientific and natural resources of the British Commonwealth is now proceeding at the Royal Society's "Empire Scientific Conference." With the example of what can be achieved by co-operative research in war, the scientists of the Dominions, India and the Colonies, are considering the means of advancing research for the benefit of all the Commonwealth peoples and for raising the standard of life, particularly of colonial peoples; but this, as the Conference insists, is only the first step to full international co-operation within the framework of the United Nations. There has been a great deal of frank speaking by the visiting scientists. British science, rich in tradition, has got to adapt itself to the facts of the 20th Century: the Dominions delegates have not disguised the strong gravitational pull which America is now exercising. The United States has become the multiple store of science. During six years of war, advances have been made there in the accumulation of fundamental knowledge, while Britain, in the Front Line, was concerned with survival. The Dominions have looked to us in the past for most fundamental research and for the recruitment and training of their scientists. Now the emphasis is on co-ordination and decentralisation. The Empire has to be considered as a whole, sharing and pooling its scientific manpower and experience. It is disquieting, for instance, that in the whole continent of Australia there are only 80 State geologists to survey the hidden resources of an area as big as the United States, and that New Zealand, with known resources of rich minerals, has only been a quarter "mapped" in terms of these resources. It is obvious that if the needs of the Dominions and, even more, of the backward colonies are to be met, the recruitment of scientists has to be increased and, as Sir Ian Heilbron said, the memberNations must sink national pride and agree to having common research institutions, which serve the needs of the Commonwealth as a whole. Out of these discussions is to come Government action and, possibly, the establishment of a scientific G.H.Q. with scientific liaison officers in the Empire capitals. One of the encouraging aspects of the Conference is the important and virile contributions of the Indian delegation.

Exports are Higher

The export figures for May show for the first time an increase in volume over the same period in 1938. Even with imports increasing as well, the adverse balance on visible trade has been appreciably reduced—to £27 million for the month. The improved position is due to a large rise in exports of machinery and vehicles, for which there is, of course, at present a practically unlimited demand. Exports of cotton goods and, still more, of coal are still far below their pre-war level; and in these fields no large-scale recovery can be looked for, at any rate for a long time to come. On the imports side, a decline in cereals was offset by increased imports of more costly foods, and there was a substantial rise in such essential materials as paper and pulp, rubber, cotton and wool. Mr. Marquand, commenting on the returns, said it was now clear that the target total of exports for 1946, which had been put at £750 million, would be exceeded, and a new target was being worked out. Satisfactory as these figures are, it would be most unwise to conclude from them that our trade problem is well on the way to solution. May is not a heavy month for imports; and on the export side we have an immense way still to go in order to reach the 75 per cent. increase on the pre-war volume that has been estimated as necessary if we are to pay our way. We are still at the stage when we can sell anything we produce, nearly regardless of price. Such a situation cannot last; and, in view of our high dependence on exports of capital goods, the real difficulty will come when buyers are in a position to choose between sellers who can afford to give credit and sellers who need cash. Still, for the moment, we are doing well, at the cost of continuing shortage of goods for the home consumers—a shortage of which, in view of our need for higher imports of both foodstuffs and materials, it would be most unwise to make any complaint.

The J.P. on Trial

The Royal Commission on J.P.s was long overdue. The terms of reference seem to be rather narrowly drafted, and at any rate to suggest that patching up of the present system, rather than drastic reshaping, is intended; but they can perhaps be stretched to cover major changes, especially in the extension of the stipendiary system. The Commission ought at all events to be free to give full consideration to the proposal that every bench of magistrates should have a full-time stipendiary chairman, even if lay magistrates are to continue to sit. Indeed, we should have liked to see the entire system of a lay magistracy brought under careful examination; there is much to be said for a complete stipendiary system, aided where necessary by lay assessors. It is not clear how far the Royal Commission will be free to go in considering these main issues. It will at any rate be able to recommend more satisfactory methods than now exist for nominating persons to be appointed as magistrates and for preventing the congestion of benches with elderly dead-heads. It will also be able to propose great improvements in the composition of juvenile courts and to ensure proper provision in all areas of this most necessary branch of the service. There is new wide agreement on the need for drastic reform, not only on the juvenile side, but also over the whole field of lay jurisdiction.

PARLIAMENT: Lost Mid-Week

Wednesday

PHINEAS' reference last week to the Parliamentary tread-mill has been punished as it deserved. For two nights and most of the day the slaves sat about in the Chamber, the Library, the Tea-room or one of their other disconsolate haunts, waiting for the too rare division bell. These two all-night sittings did not even serve the purpose of improving the batting averages. So Members sat about doing nothing, and some of those, who cannot take tea, did not decrease the melancholy of their companions by their mid-week version of "The Lost Week-End."

The Committee stage of the Finance Bill, the occasion of all the trouble, had begun with spacious debates on the early clauses, conducted by the old professionals.

> Alas regardless of their doom the little victims play;
> No sense have they of ill to come
> Nor care beyond to-day.

In retrospect how halcyon seem the debates on those early clauses: Gurney Braithwaite, a chirpy grasshopper with a sting in its tail; Marples, who still looks like an "Imp" and often talks very good sense; David Eccles, precise and well-informed; "Talkie" Williams, who is funny less often than he thinks; Sir William Darling, whose elevated buffoonery has acquired a Dickensian rotundity; "Marathon" Wakefield, most conscientious long-distance speaker in the House; Sir Arnold Gridley, unintelligible critic of the unintelligible clauses; and, on the Government side, the isolated figure of "Slim" Callaghan, wearing his Old Collectors' (Income-Tax) tie for the occasion. For the Committee stage of the Finance Bill has been and always should be the back-benchers' Gaudy, the annual unrestricted question-time on everything financial. It is a grave mistake that the Labour back-benchers are discouraged from taking part.

This year, moreover, someone had blundered. By 2 a.m. on Tuesday morning, no one could accuse the Opposition of obstruction. The debate had been loquacious, but good-tempered and co-operative. The fact remained, however, that the number of clauses and schedules still to be discussed was sufficient for three full days' debate; and, to make matters worse, the Leader of the House was not present to explain how this miscalculation had occurred. Good humour and co-operation suddenly vanished. Dr. Dalton and Mr. Stanley began debating with a deadly, polished elegance. Without any formal declaration of war we had drifted into a Parliamentary battle.

In the Parliamentary game, the weaker side can always score. Despite the closure and all the other Government methods of cutting short debate, a determined Opposition can always bring the business of the House to a full-stop. This is precisely what Mr. Stanley, with admirable support from those behind him, achieved in a very few hours. The attempt to get the Committee stage of the Finance Bill over in three and a half days has failed, and will probably never be repeated.

Monday night had its great moments, including tea on the Terrace at 6 a.m. on an exquisite June morning. Dr. Dalton and Mr. Stanley were beautifully matched protagonists. Dr. Dalton is always the master of his Bill, his brief, his Party and the House, dominating less by wit than by sheer intellectual and physical power, and a concentration of purpose which is strengthened by popularity and success. He won first honours and the Tories made it quite clear that *he* was not the enemy they were obstructing. Mr. Stanley has never been so brilliant, witty and charming—nor so venomous, at those unpredictable moments when his whole face is transformed by an uprush of Hotspur rage. The second strings were also in character; Captain Crookshank, a debonair Polonius, and Mr. Hall, making an excellent Dormouse to the Chancellor's Mad Hatter.

On Tuesday afternoon, when we were forced to watch yet another of those silly personal squabbles between Mr. Morrison and Mr. Churchill, it was pleasant to remember the level of Parliamentary debate maintained for eighteen hours by Dr. Dalton and Mr. Stanley.

PHINEAS

GOVERNMENT AND B.B.C.

DESPITE the Government's refusal, there is an overwhelming case for a full inquiry into the B.B.C. and the submission of a Report to Parliament before the Charter is renewed. This case will be pressed not only by the Opposition Front Bench, which has of course tabled a motion, but by every Member of both Houses with any knowledge of the technical and administrative development of broadcasting during the last ten years.

It is indeed worth recalling how much the B.B.C. controlled when the Ullswater Committee made its Report. At that time, broadcasting consisted, to all intents and purposes, of the Home Services. True, the Empire Service had just been started, but it had not developed to anything like its present size; and no one could then foresee that the Overseas Service in 1946 would be broadcasting to the English-speaking world programmes as varied, as ambitious, as expensive, and often a good deal more vital than those in the Home Service. Moreover, in 1936 the European Service had not even been envisaged. The projection of Great Britain to the world through broadcasting, both in English, and in dozens of foreign languages and the host of problems which this new development of radio brings with it, are things which have developed since the last Committee of Inquiry investigated the organisation of the B.B.C.

We are not concerned here, primarily, with news policy or with the extent of political and religious controversy which the B.B.C. should encourage. These are issues which naturally absorb the attention of politicians and of the Governors of the B.B.C. Indeed they sometimes seem to forget other very important technical and administrative problems which must be solved if British broadcasting is to provide good entertainment and information to the home public and a satisfactory picture of this country to peoples overseas.

There may have been in 1936 a strong case for continuing to give to the B.B.C. a monopoly control of all forms of broadcasting. But do the same arguments apply ten years later? Without a full investigation, no one can say. Certainly the Home listener cannot reasonably be asked to pay for the cost of the Overseas and European Services which supply him with no service at all. If the Government is to pay for them entirely, then should not the Government control them? On the other hand, is it technically practicable to maintain one group of Government owned transmitters for Overseas broadcasting and another group of B.B.C. transmitters for Home services?

Why is reception in many parts of Britain so much worse than before the war? Is the B.B.C. treatment of authors as unfair as the Society of Authors believes? What is the proper solution of the interminable squabble between the Corporation and the musicians? How much justification is there for the complaints so widely made by members of the B.B.C. staff? And finally, can an adequate Parliamentary control of B.B.C. policy be discovered, which avoids the danger of Parliamentary dictation? These are only examples of the kind of problems which urgently demand investigation to-day. Not one of them is adequately dealt with either in the Report or the recommendations of the Ullswater Committee of 1936.

But broadcasting has not merely increased in volume and extent. Since 1936, two new and important technical developments have occurred—television and frequency modulation. In 1936, television was still in the experimental stage and frequency modulation had not yet been developed. We are still ahead of America in television. Rapid development of a large television public may enable us to persuade other nations to adopt our system and buy our sets. Will it happen under B.B.C. management? We cannot discover without a full investigation.

There is a third, and perhaps even more powerful, argument for a Committee of Inquiry. As the result of trial and error throughout the world, there are at present in operation four different systems of radio organisation. The first is typified by America, where broadcasting stations are privately owned, and programmes are provided by "the networks"—huge private companies which buy time from the stations in order to hire it to advertisers. In the U.S.A. the interests of the public are protected by the F.C.C., an extremely autocratic Federal organisation, with power to control, not merely technical matters, such as wavelengths, but the content of programmes. The second system is the Russian, where the State owns and controls the transmitters and the studios, and all broadcasting staff are civil servants. The third system is the British, where the State gives to a public corporation a monopoly control, both of transmitters and programmes, but purports not to intervene in the programme policy of the corporation. The fourth system, of which there are several variants, is best typified by New Zealand and Australia. In Australia, there is one State system of broadcasting, and one commercial. In New Zealand, the State owns all the transmitters and itself runs the programmes on one network. The other network is hired out by the State to commercial firms. But the State receives all the revenues of commercial broadcasting and exerts a very careful control of the programmes.

Any impartial investigator would admit that each of these four systems has its advantages from the point of view of the listener, and each has its disadvantages too. It cannot possibly be assumed, without careful comparison—particularly with the Australian and New Zealand methods—that the granting of a single monopoly to the B.B.C. provides the best service to the Home listener or the most satisfactory method of presenting Britain to the world. Nor can it be assumed that the B.B.C. on the technical side has a record of achievement equal to other countries. It seems self-evident that before the Charter is renewed, the rival merits of these four systems should once again be investigated in the light of all the new developments which have occurred since 1936.

Why, then, has the Government so firmly refused a Committee of Inquiry? There can be little doubt about the reason. Mr. Attlee has been constantly afraid that the Labour Government would be accused of introducing Left-wing propaganda on the air. He has therefore been most careful to permit the B.B.C. to regain all its peacetime liberty from Cabinet interference. (This does not of course mean that Departments exercise no day by day influence on the B.B.C.) Now he feels that if the Government institutes an investigation and proposes any drastic change in the organisation of our broadcasting services, it will be accused of seeking to capture broadcasting for party propaganda.

There would be much to be said for this view if a Committee of Inquiry were in fact to concern itself primarily with the content of Home programmes. But it is difficult to believe that any sensible Committee would dream of doing so. "Programming," whether of news or entertainment, is a matter for programme directors and producers, and not for Committee men. A Committee's job is to recommend an administrative and technical structure which will enable the producer, the director and the editor to do their work efficiently, and to decide whether monopoly or competition achieves the best results. It would not have been impossible, if the Government had so desired, to frame the terms of reference of the Committee of Inquiry so as to give priority to questions of organisation. In his anxiety to avoid the accusation of monopolising the B.B.C. for Party purposes, the Prime Minister has laid himself open to the equally serious charge of permitting the Corporation to retain its monopoly without any investigation on behalf of the public.

CHANGING INDIA

SIXTEEN years have passed since I was last in India and I am asking myself what changes I have observed. Change in this ancient land is a word that jars; nothing is forgotten and nothing is rejected. In the frescoes of the Ajanta caves that date from the first centuries of our era you will see the same features, the same graceful costumes, the same gestures and manners that delight you to-day, though Indians in that Buddhist era were freer and happier than they have ever since been. The big changes that are going on around us are imperceptible and immeasurable. How much in these years has Gandhi achieved by his re-interpretation of Hindu morals and religion? He denies nothing; he discards nothing save untouchability. And yet when I watch the reverent crowd that attends his open-air prayer-meetings in Delhi, I suspect that a re-orientation towards a new humanitarian outlook is going on in millions of minds without iconoclasm. Socialist thinking in these years has made an immense advance and Communism, unpopular though it is, is now a force. But Gandhi's stress on ethics and non-violence has permeated Indian thinking and will survive him when his voice is silent.

The village does not change, save that in some provinces it is more militant than it was and bent on achieving a social transformation. In the great towns the eye detects at once the ugly march of industrialisation. Factory chimneys in Delhi share the sky-line with the minarets of the Moghul mosques. Bombay has expanded in straggling suburbs of concrete. Since the war the bigger cities have doubled their population, and in the slums the congestion would rouse a less-patient people to the wrath that makes revolutions. As before, the homeless poor spend the night sleeping on the pavement with a rag of sacking under them, but they seemed to me more numerous than they were. Prices have risen nearly threefold and inflation has had its usual results. The profiteers have made great fortunes; the urban workers have fared relatively well; the bigger peasants have paid off their debts, but the landless proletarians in the villages face perpetual hunger, while the ill-paid brain-workers, the teachers and the clerks, wage a desperate and losing battle against penury.

New industries have sprung up since last I saw these towns—engineering shops in great profusion, chemical works and even highly skilled trades like the making of surgical instruments. Some pioneers, who had to fight against the jealousy of the imperial machine, have won their hard battle at last, in shipping, for instance, and even in shipbuilding. The power of Indian big business is much more obtrusive than it was and other ambitious groups have sprung into action in the wake of the Tatas and Birlas. Oddly enough, they do not form trusts or aim at monopoly, though there have been agreements to control output or prices in jute, tea, cement and sugar. Starting with cotton, such a group will take up steel, sugar or chemicals, and it may go on to hydro-electricity or aviation. Mr. Birla is even buying up newspapers. Perhaps because there is no trust structure in Indian industry, its leaders favour state planning. Sixteen years ago *laissez-faire* was a rigid orthodoxy which only a few pioneers disputed. To-day, thanks in part to Congress and in part to the Tatas, planning is the accepted policy. It is likely to go far beyond the first obvious objectives—the control of the rivers, electric power, food production, forestry, soil erosion, fisheries, and the utilisation of waste lands. It will soon be engaged in an active, long-range campaign for industrialisation. India may embark on bold experiments in State-Socialism, and I have heard leading industrialists advocate the creation of new industries in which the State will hold 51 per cent. of the share capital. I was startled to find that in the Nizam's dominions, otherwise a feudal backwater, most of the few industrial concerns are run on this basis, when they are not entirely State-owned. I saw in Hyderabad an ambitious plan for the utilisation of the River Godavari for power and irrigation, which included the erection of a big steel plant and the building of a new industrial town—all of it by the State. It was not a mere paper project; the first appropriations had been granted. Every one insists on the dispersal of industry, and most of the planners are thinking actively of ways and means to raise the level of village life. Gandhi's propaganda for hand-spinning erred by exaggeration, but he has compelled Indians to face the central problem of their economy—the employment of the rural masses.

This new absorption in industry and planning would be futile, if Indians had remained as indifferent to the physical sciences as they were a generation ago. They still lag far behind, but it is not for lack of talent. It happened that in a hospitable home in which I stayed, I met as fellow-guests several Indian scientists. One was an F.R.S., one an authority on cosmic rays; another had much to tell of the research work of the Bangalore Institute. They had among them a width of interest and an imaginative daring that won instant sympathy and respect. Others were engaged in experimental work for the advancement of agriculture and often they turned our heads by describing the easy miracles that could be achieved, if intelligence were sovereign in this land. There was hope for India in this inventiveness, but in spite of much progress India is tragically short of trained technicians.

The prestige of the bureaucracy has fallen during these years. Indian nationalists used to respect its efficiency and incorruptibility even while they fought it. Those days are over. They will still single out individual Englishmen to whom they will pay an unstinted tribute of admiration and affection, but these are the rare exceptions. My own impression is that sympathy for Indians is now much commoner in the army than it is in the Civil Service; three of the best officials I happened to meet were soldiers who had been transferred to civilian work.

The explanation of this alienation is not mysterious. For a quarter of a century the bureaucracy has been engaged in fighting Congress, and it has come to feel itself more than ever an isolated garrison in a hostile land. The war aggravated this attitude since Congress opposed participation and went into active revolt in 1942. The natural but disastrous result was that the bureaucracy leaned more than ever on the Muslims and habitually favoured the League. Wherever I went, I had to listen to painful stories of the brutal behaviour of the police. That this force was always corrupt is an old story. In fact, the lower ranks could not live on their pay. The new fact for me was that Indians no longer exempt Englishmen from their accusations. There is no doubt that military officers, engaged on a great scale in buying supplies, frequently took commissions. I might have doubted this, until an Indian manufacturer whose income tax returns were challenged because they included no item for such commissions, showed me the judgment of the Appeal Tribunal. "It is a matter of common knowledge," so it ran, "that military contracts cannot be secured or finished goods get approved without some capital outlay in the form of payments or some illegal gratifications." The deterioration of standards of conduct has been widespread during these years. The uncertainty of the future may partly explain this demoralisation.

To turn to pleasanter themes: The renaissance of the arts which Tagore started in Bengal is still alive, but I doubt if it retains its first impetus. The war and the passions of the national struggle were not a favourable environment. Indian painters are still experimenting, swaying uncertainly between attempts to revive dead traditions and to compromise with European influences, among them Gauguin.

If I saw much that is promising, I saw nothing first-rate. Popular standards, above all in Hindu religious art, are still deplorably low. Music is in the same case, and dancing may be at the moment the most vital of the arts, for it bases itself on a folk tradition that is still alive. Occasional experiments are being made by the young generation and the Left to use both dancing and the theatre for purposes of propaganda. In a big mill in Delhi, the workers have their own theatre and act their own plays. Here are beginnings from which a new art may develop. The enigma is the future of the Indian film, which will be the decisive popular influence. The few examples I saw were naive and amateurish, a blend of Western technique with Indian traditional sentiment, set to a musical accompaniment that mingled both styles in a puzzling compromise. Something interesting and original may emerge, but Indians have not found it yet.

Social changes impressed me even more among Muslims than among Hindus, though caste is breaking down at an accelerated pace. Sixteen years ago the leading man in the Muslim political world of that day asked me to his house. As I arrived, a closely shuttered car drew up at the door. The servants thrust me hurriedly into a side-room, but I caught a fleeting glimpse of some veiled figures mounting the stairs. This time, the same man's son invited me to dinner. His wife was out of *purdah* and so were her women guests and they behaved with an ease and poise which meant that a social revolution has been accomplished in a single generation. This is now usual among the upper strata of Muslim society in the bigger towns. This salutary innovation will percolate gradually downwards. There are other happy signs of change in the Muslim world, in spite of political incitements to fanaticism. In Bengal the younger and more progressive mullahs are beginning to preach in Bengali, instead of the Arabic which few understand. In Kashmir I found a hot but victorious struggle going on between the party of the Left and the conservative Muslims for the control of the mosques and their pious foundations. Led by Sheikh Abdulla (now on trial for sedition) they plan to use the surplus funds of these estates to found an "Arabic college"; that is to say a theological college, which will give the clergy a modern social outlook and fit them to be pioneers and teachers in the benighted villages of this State. After all India is changing.

Delhi. H. N. BRAILSFORD

A LONDON DIARY

"No, *no* cigarettes," said Bob, who runs our village pub, "and unless there's more of things soon there'll be a revolution, I tell you." "Yes," said a glass of stout standing by, "there's plenty for the rich. Black market everywhere. It ought to be stopped." "I don't believe there's a food shortage at all," said a mild-and-bitter. "A pal of mine just back from Italy says you can buy any bloody thing you like there. Lashings of food, he says. This bread gives you the stomach-ache. It won't keep two days without going mouldy." I argued the point—all the points. Black-market? Yes, if you buy eggs in the village, it's black-market, isn't it? "But perhaps you meant something more serious?" He did. Black-market in forged petrol coupons, and in tyres and everything else in the trade he knew. Right, it should be stopped. Bread? Personally, I never liked it better; the country is healthy and there's more food in dark bread. Will people mind bread rationing if there's more of other things? No, ten ounces would be O.K., but you need something with it to do a day's work. More fat, meat and cheese. I thought of the excess of meat in Ireland that might help. But what does it all come to? That people who would put up with things in the war years fall an easy prey to Beaverbrook propaganda which has reached a point of meanness and unscrupulousness that I've not seen in this country since

1931. The Government is to blame, I think, for not starting a scientific publicity campaign. Facts, the minimum of propaganda; public meetings about food all over the country; booklets with photographs; arguments to show exactly what improvements can be made. Clear statements of the reasons why we are going short.

* * *

A particularly vicious bit of propaganda appears in the *Western Mail*, where a strip cartoon tries to convince us that we are once again shedding namby-pamby tears over the poor, starving Germans, while our Rhine troops are shocked by the reports of food cuts in Britain. The Government, of course, is blamed for fooling the public. Actually, as the *Western Mail* will discover with a shock before long, every responsible soldier in the Rhineland is intensely alarmed about the German food situation; the propaganda for feeding the Germans comes not from the Government, which has been resisting it, but from Military Government which cannot carry on with its job unless more food arrives in Germany. Presumably the *Western Mail* and other similar papers will have swung round in a few months' time to the opposite tack. Do we remember what happened last time? Well, I do remember. First, newspapers which did a vitriolic "Don't feed Hun babies" campaign became terrified of Bolshevism and licked Hitler's jackboots.

* * *

It was mainly because the Allies were certain to repeat this folly, unless from the start we backed anti-Nazi Germans, that I always so strenuously controverted Lord Vansittart. There never was a more muddle-headed, nice fellow than Vansittart. I recall in the war how shocked he was when I opposed the indiscriminate destruction of German factories which we should need in rebuilding post-war Europe. Now I see that he supports Boothby. He is reduced in the letter published in this issue to repeating that he never said that there were no "good Germans." Of course, he did not; nor did I so misrepresent him. I referred to the evil done by "Vansittartite" propaganda, the general gist of which was that we had to treat all Germans as enemies—even those who had resisted Hitler in concentration camps. The result of this evil and senseless propaganda is that the public, again filled up with anti-Soviet talk, is in a complete confusion, while our Military Government searches for German administrators and often finds them among the least trustworthy.

* * *

Another ludricrous result of the Vansittartite confusion is that though we have promised to aid German re-education and act as midwives to German democracy, we still leave German schools without books or paper, and do not allow the school teachers to see even educational journals from this country. A few copies of this and other journals are now sent to selected German officials, but you cannot post a copy of a British newspaper to any of the thousands of Germans who, after thirteen years of isolation and propaganda are crying out for information about the world outside the Reich. I had the chance last week of discussing these educational handicaps with Dr. Grimme, former Minister of Education in Prussia in the Weimar Republic, and Dr. Landahl, now senator in charge of education in Hamburg. They were in England to meet British teachers and education officials as guests of the "German Educational Reconstruction" group—a small body which has kept quietly at work during the war, knowing that the time would come when we should need the friendship and co-operation of men like Landahl and Grimme, who, because of his belief in a sane and democratic conception of education, spent years in one of Hitler's concentration camps. The Labour Party as a whole seems strangely slow to awaken to the job we have undertaken in Germany, but I am glad to know that Miss Wilkinson was among the few British Socialists who have seen the first German officials to visit us since the war.

I hear from a friend who has just come back from Belgrade that even the most violently anti-Communist American newspaper men are impressed, indeed astounded, with the fairness of the Mihailovich trial and the courtesy shown to him by the Court. His method of defence is to admit everything, putting the responsibility on his officers or the British or on anyone except himself. Ozna, which shares the usual bad characteristics of a secret police in a revolutionary State, seems not to be playing any malignant role in this matter. The strong constructive side of the Partisan movement is still uppermost in the country, where a great programme of reconstruction is being carried out with popular enthusiasm. Here is a typical example of the gossip which is worked up for anti-Tito propaganda. There are always complaints, which have, I believe, always proved to be untrue, that Unrra supplies to Yugoslavia are sent to the Soviet Union. An official inquiry was made the other day about an Unrra petrol tank truck which an official of a foreign embassy alleged he had seen delivering gasoline at the residence of a Russian Colonel. The upshot was that the truck proved to be not a petrol tank but "a cesspool-emptying vehicle of English make equipped with tank and pump," allocated to the Belgrade City Committee for sewage purposes.

* * *

Both the film, *Henry V*, and the fine performances of the Old Vic seem to have provoked the same reaction in America. Film critics have praised Olivier and the technical brilliance of the film and glumly accepted the Shakespeare whose humour and diction apparently baffle them. In New York, audiences and critics alike seem to have regarded the Old Vic company's productions as a triumph of performance over dated and inappropriate plays. I hear from a correspondent who went to the Century Theatre on several occasions that Olivier and Richardson did their best to avoid the spotlight and to bring out the repertory team character of the productions. But the audiences would try to lionise the stars. Only on the last night did they succeed in getting more than eight curtains, when hundreds pressed in through the exits to join the audience in demanding speeches from the stage. This tour, I hear, has raised the prestige of the British theatre in America, though only 87,000 people managed to see it after besieging the theatre for tickets.

* * *

When I looked in at the Gambit Club last week the first round of the Anglo-Soviet radio chess match was nearly over. Winter had defeated Bronstein and Alexander had lost his first game to Botvinnik, who is acknowledged as the world's best player. In the second round the Alexander-Botvinnik game was an amusing and dashing affair, with Botvinnik showing the most dangerous ingenuity when he was badly down on pieces. I was struck, as I looked round the boards, with the bad luck of several of the British players who had to accept very favourable draws. I talked to Klein about his draw with Keres. In my simplicity, I'd have gone on a bit longer in the hope of a win. No, Klein said, the game could not have been won in spite of his final pawn capture. We talked about the contrast of the British and Russian attitudes to games. Klein was at work, teaching, two days before the match and had some difficulty in getting leave of absence. The Russian team had a "training" vacation in the Caucasus and a special ration of vitamins. They regard all international sport as a matter of prestige and politics. The Americans, who, by the way, did less well against the Russians than the British, turn any game into a profit-making business if they can, though as far as I know, they have not yet succeeded in commercialising chess. The British are still amateurs, playing because they enjoy it and not minding too much whether they are beaten at chess, tennis or even cricket.

CRITIC

THE COMEDIANS

After five acts of implacable Nemesis,
After the sweep of Melpomene's rage,
Blood-boltered corpses are dragged off the premises
And serio-comics take over the stage.
After the massacre, madness and merriment,
As into the wings the tragedians pass—
History repeats the dramatic experiment
After the tragedy follows the farce.

Luxembourg stages the Act International,
Big Four top-liners in knockabout turns,
World-famous comics, superbly irrational,
Big-hearted Bevin and wisecracking Byrnes.
Cross-talk and patter of polished urbanity,
See-saws and somersaults under the arcs,
What a performance of splendid insanity
By Bevin and Byrnes and the two Brothers Marx!

See how they slide on the tightrope precarious,
The crack Anglo-Saxon and Soviet team!
Their balancing antics are simply hilarious,
Their slow-motion act is an absolute scream.
Watch them at work on their comic cartography,
Carving the map on the flying trapeze,
See them do crosswords in terms of geography,
Austria, Trieste, the Dodecanese.

Always entangled in props miscellaneous,
Always on time with the old custard pie,
Everything looks unrehearsed and spontaneous—
No wonder the audience laugh till they cry.
Card tricks and riddles in endless variety,
Plenty of ideological fun,
Shrieking spectators have but one anxiety—
The show's been put on for a limited run.

Every performance becomes more uproarious,
Everyone follows the World's Crazy Gang,
Everyone knows, through their fooling laborious
The theatre may shortly go up with a bang.
The Luxembourg Troupe is a new revelation,
Big Four comedians are tops in their class—
After the carnage the laughing sensation,
Will there be tragedy after the farce?

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. H. Scott.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

On oath, Mrs. ——— told the court that she was sorry for having sent such a letter. She said she was a poet of no mean order and she believed it was a privilege of genius to be a little indecent.—*West Lancashire Evening Gazette.*

A policeman alleged that Phillips used indecent language, but Phillips said: "I was discussing Bevin's foreign policy with my friend when a policeman came behind me and snatched me into a police box."—*Manchester Evening Chronicle.*

Nurses complained of rough handling when they sold charity kisses at Acton Hospital fête last year, so at this year's fête, on Saturday, a bonniest baby contest will be held instead.—*Evening News.*

Alleging that black market transactions are carried out in the Aylesbury Market, the Council plans to raise the rent of stalls.—*Evening News.*

People in the Seven Sisters Road last night were startled by the spectacle of a bearded vagabond who, as he shuffled along, shouted, "Wheat for the hungry!" Asked by our reporter who he was, the tramp replied only with a withering look.—*North London Press.*

If foxes could hear all sides in the debate on hunting, I think they would vote solidly for its continuance.—*The Field.*

PERON PLAYS POKER

Ever since his emergence as the leading figure in Argentine politics, General Peron has shown great ability in confounding his critics. Although his opponents exposed the covert association of the military régime with the Nazis, Peron's election campaign of intransigeant nationalism and a spectacular social programme succeeded: although democratic opinion abroad demanded a diplomatic rupture as a protest against the dictatorship, Peron was confident that nothing would be done. A hungry world, he calculated, would do little that might jeopardise shipments of Argentine foodstuffs. Peron realised, moreover, that British anxiety to preserve trade and financial interests in Argentina against the United States presented him with a chance to play one Power off against the other.

In the brief period since his inauguration as President, Peron's sense of timing has helped him further to consolidate his position. He has now established Argentine diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union for the first time and is shortly to receive two official British economic missions. The first act has attracted most attention; the second is probably more important.

After Mr. Molotov's stand against the admission of Argentina to the United Nations, where he had an unanswerable moral case, the Moscow press continued to criticise Peron until his election made it clear that he had come to stay. By then, as relations between the Soviet Union and the United States continued to deteriorate, the Russians had become more interested in Peron's opposition to Washington's domination of Pan-American politics—and the consequent obstruction to a hemisphere military alliance with standardised American equipment—than in Peron's domestic policy, which had just received striking popular endorsement. Peron, on the other hand, could afford to risk domestic Catholic criticism. By exchanging envoys with the Soviet Union and opening trade discussions with a Russian mission, he has drawn yet another Power into his game. The more the interests of the Big Three conflict, the easier it is for Argentina to wring concessions from each by the threat of entertaining the advances of the others. In this way, Peron believes his country can best profit from its present advantageous position and further liberate itself from the economic suzerainty of the foreigners.

But, on the economic side, relations with Britain present the most difficult problem. While he fully shares the extreme nationalists' dislike of the extensive British investments in Argentina and sees, in the development of Argentina's domestic industry, a means speedily to liquidate the old bi-lateral relationship between British industry and Argentina's foodstuffs economy, Peron realises that in spite of Britain's weakened position he cannot act too rashly. At present, Argentina has a blocked account of about £140 millions in London, deferred payment for wartime food supplies. The trade agreement with Britain runs out on August 20th. Yet this country remains the biggest purchaser of Argentine food, and is making a serious effort to regain the market which dwindled away during the war.

Obviously, the trade mission, which is led by a senior official of the Board of Trade, and the financial delegation, which includes Sir Wilfred Eady of the Treasury and Sir Montague Eddy, Chairman of the British Argentine Railway Council, are seeking a comprehensive settlement in Buenos Aires. First of all, they are to try to settle the future of the British-owned railways, whose stocks now stand at a fraction of their nominal value. Although Peron seems anxious to nationalise them—and the Mitre Law, under which they have been favoured for the last three decades, expires this year—he certainly does not intend to accept the gentle suggestions in the London financial press that the railways should be exchanged for the sterling balances, which are about equivalent to their face value. Though the British mission may manage to earmark some of the London balances as compensation, Argentina is more anxious to get machinery and similar imports unobtainable in the war years than to pay a high price for railways which have always been the subject of bitter criticism in Argentine on both technical and financial grounds. Any concession that Peron makes in the railway talks—in which, as the City Editor of *The Times* points out, Sir Montague Eddy will "represent the specific interests of British capital" rather than the British Government—will have to be paid for in other ways. At the moment, Argentine imports from the United States are nearly double those from Britain, and Peron is well aware that the mission wants to discover what effect the American proposals for a world trade conference is likely to have on Anglo-Argentine commerce.

Since Peron has so far managed to foster Argentine industry without becoming too deeply embroiled with the landowners, he will try to make a deal which will ensure a steady and profitable market for Argentine foodstuffs in Britain, and confine imports from this country as far as possible to capital goods and manufactures which domestic industry is unable to supply in sufficient bulk.

For the present, Peron is playing a cautious game with the United States. While he is willing to see a thriving trade with the United States, politically he is trying to make Washington work its passage after the affront of the *Blue Book* and Mr. Braden's backing for his opponents. But it suits Peron's book to court London and Moscow until he sees how far he can build up the southern bloc of Latin-American nations, unresponsive to United States leadership, which has been the central aim of Argentine foreign policy in recent years.

Since President Peron joined the poker game he has had more than his share of luck.

Norman MacKenzie

THE BRIDGEHEAD

[*From a Belfast Correspondent*]

In their General Election campaign of last summer, the Unionist Party appealed to the electorate to help them "hold the Bridgehead." There was some justification, in the military sense, for giving Northern Ireland this title; it was here that the first American troops landed, and from our ports and airfields that the North Atlantic shipping routes were protected. The Unionists held their "bridgehead" by a reduced majority, and recently the Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, addressing their annual conference, gave the word added significance. He said that Northern Ireland should not be thought of as the last bulwark of Conservatism, but rather as the bridgehead whence Gt. Britain's political reconversion would proceed. Living here, we cannot think he meant anything but a fulsome compliment to his Ulster colleagues, for the body politic of this little State heaves, writhes and rumbles with internal gripes and spasms, and is extremely unlikely to be envied or emulated by any other country in the world.

To begin with, we have three major political parties, Unionist, Nationalist and Labour. The Unionists are similar to Britain's Conservatives, 1910 vintage, and the loudest-creaking plank in their platform is the maintenance of Partition and the British Connection. The Nationalists, called Green Tories in progressive circles, have a similar policy to the Unionists in domestic affairs, with the over-riding aim of abolishing Partition. The Labour Party has a domestic policy as similar as possible to that of the British Labour Party. To the ever-present problem of Partition it says: "Time enough to solve it by plebiscite after the people are employed and housed." It accuses the other two major parties of playing up this issue to hide their real aims. By this policy Labour stands to gain from both sides, since it offers common ground for Unionist and Nationalist worker, for Protestant and Catholic; but it loses, to both sides, its race- and religion-conscious members. Thus two of Labour's ablest leaders, Midgely and Beattie, peeled off the main party, one to either side, and now sit in the Stormont Parliament playing one man bands.

As well as these three major parties we have Independents from the University—Dr. McSorley, a nationalist with a social conscience, and Mrs. Calvert, a cultured and pinkish liberal. Add Harry Diamond, sole representative of the Socialist Republicans who carry Conolly's torch; add Independent Unionists Henderson and Nixon; remember that in a pocket Parliament of 52 members each of these individuals is comparable to a determined group of 12 at Westminster, and you will begin to understand the complexity of Ulster politics.

Under the aegis of this Stormont Parliament, with its cross currents of race and religion, its heritage of bigotry and hatred, and its direct clashes of personalities, Northern Ireland is limping into the post-war era. We had unemployment throughout the War, in spite of a constant coming and going of light industries tempted from Britain by local grants and cheap loans, by offers of sites and new factories, and by our ample labour resources. Now the latest analysed returns (March), show 32,500 unemployed—4,000 in agriculture, partially excusable at the season, 1,700 in engineering, the rejects of our defunct aircraft industry, nearly 4,000 in building and civil engineering, in spite of the urgent need for 100,000 houses, and so forth, with 2,500 unemployed ex-Service personnel to make up the total. There are 1,500 unemployed linen workers, whilst employers are desperate for labour. Our linen industry was recently cited in Stormont as paying the lowest wages in Great Britain—the highest paid skilled worker in the spinning mills receives 40*s.* 6*d.* plus 6*s.* 6*d.* timekeeping bonus per week of 48 hours, and the almost 19th century conditions were demonstrated by last month's baton charges on women strikers at Gilford. Now the swift-fingered women and girls, who have earned five times the wages in light munition work, regard the few shillings of the linen mills as not worth working for, and choose to mind the house.

Real social distress is not yet widespread except in the matter of overcrowding, but there are unmistakable signs of worse times to come. In the Belfast Trades Council, whose proceedings are selectively and microscopically reported in the Tory, and only newspapers, they say "Even if we had the houses, who could pay the rents?" A tailor tells me that he has £300 worth of suits waiting for customers who have not returned for fitting. The pubs, which eighteen months ago displayed "sold out" notices, now have difficulty in selling their quota. The auction prices of second-hand furniture are falling. Street corners support growing groups of idlers.

Still the asset column is far from blank. Our chief wartime gain is a Ministry of Health and Local Government, long demanded by Labour. More tangible is the Northern Ireland Housing Trust, a miniature T.V.A. with "the authority of Government and the flexibility of private enterprise," to use Roosevelt's phrase. This venture, launched by the Unionist Government in the face of our desperate housing situation and just in time to forestall their chief dread, a *rapprochement* between distressed Catholics and Protestants, has not produced a harvest of houses in its first twelvemonth of office, but has ploughed and sown wide fields. Town planning has arrived and seems to have taken root, but one wonders if it will be allowed to flower. A Fabian Society has been inaugurated, and is quietly rolling up its sleeves. The Northern Ireland Region of the B.B.C. has been reorganised and revitalized by local writers, new producers, new themes, new voices. The Drama flourishes as never before: the Belfast Shakespeare Society is to be resurrected; the plastic arts seem to be losing some of their wartime public, but music draws crowds to compare with those of Manchester.

The ever-growing Labour movement feels hopeful of the future. The Tories are un-

comfortable, unsure and truculent, their opposition is more numerous, more able and more vigorous than ever before. Sir Basil Brooke appealed to the electorate some months before the British General Election, and many borderline cases must have voted *quo ante bellum* for lack of a precedent. Now the people are beginning to feel that they were rushed into erecting a fence between themselves and the great social reforms of Britain's new Government, especially since the National Health Act and Repeal of Trades Disputes Act are to be withheld. The Unionists find themselves obliged to mute their loudest sound effect—the British Connection—and to drop their election slogan "Step by step with Britain in social legislation." As Tories, they are short of alternative slogans, and completely lack a positive social policy. So one feels that the present situation cannot last; the comparison between the lot of the peoples of Britain and Northern Ireland will become ever more obvious; unemployment is mounting daily; and health and welfare services are twenty years behind the times. The Unionist Government, in their dilemma, will make some grave error, there will be another general election before their five year term expires, and then anything may happen.

WELCOME, STRANGERS!

A THOUSAND FEET above the Piraeus the Greek brides began to sing. Their voices rose, distinct and mournful, above the pounding of the engines and remained vibrating on the same note of distress. I turned round to look. The brides sat back with their eyes closed, their mouths rigid round that one melancholy note. What were they mourning for? The red soil they would never see again? This sea, now changed to a horny wrinkled skin, so soft-breathing, moving only in sleep? My heart filled with pity for them. What would Balham think? How would Tooting receive their rusty cries, this heathen chatter? I thought of England—the sweet cups of tea, evenings in the pungent discomfort of pubs, the indignant bosoms of mothers-in-law, dead endless Sundays. But as the hours went by and the wailing continued, irritation and anger squeezed out the last driblet of my pity and I took refuge in the thought that this could not last for ever, that at some time, waiting patiently in the future, unseen but already existing, was the moment when we would land and be let out of our cage.

* * *

We had all met earlier at six o'clock in the morning—never my finest hour. As I entered the air terminus in Athens, my face swollen and haggard and with a brassy tongue, there were the brides perched like excited parrots round a table. "Raisin?" the eldest bride screamed, pointing to the wooden box under my arm and holding up her own string bag which was packed with presents for England. She wore a spreading sail-like hat above which rose a white feather; her smile revealed a sunburst of gold. "Cheerio!" she called. "How do you do! Jolly good chap!" She enunciated these words with enormous pride: they were all the English she had. "Cheerio!" she repeated. At such moments one is handicapped by a middle-class education: I felt all the embarrassment of a respectable spinster outraged by the shouts of a charabanc crowd. Even the major, I observed maliciously, was disconcerted. He arrived punctually, as the clock struck—so unlike myself who must always be half an hour too early in order to avoid being an hour too late—and she pounced on him, shaking a bag of Turkish delight now kneaded into a roll of dough. "Thank you, thank you," he said and shook his head. Her chatter broke out excitedly and he tried again. "Most kind of you, Madame—but no." He sniffed primly. "No, thank you," he repeated. Again she shook the bag and showed him her golden teeth. "How do you do!" she said. "Jolly good chap!" For a moment I thought he was going to run. But he pulled himself together. Pointing to his pipe he said, "Pipe. Smoke. No eatee. Savee?" and strode towards the desk.

There must have been fifty friends and relations to see them off. While we waited in the bus, they pressed their faces to the glass, waved their hands, screamed their farewells and admonitions. The five brides, led by the eldest, screeched back their lamentations, the bus vibrated with the noise of the high cracked voices. When the bus started the youngest followed us, bobbing up and down among the crowd, leaping from pavement to gutter and back again. Sometimes it seemed that we had left them behind, and the English who had been sitting in petrified shame relaxed a little. But presently the bus would be held up and round the corner, still springing and waving, came the runners; the farewells would begin again while half a dozen drivers added to the din by trumpeting on their horns.

* * *

At every European airport there are stockades into which the English can retire and lay down their white men's burdens. This is home: memories of England come back in the taste of metallic tea and stale corned beef sandwiches, at the sight of the photographs of Churchill, Montgomery and Tedder smiling down from the walls. Afterwards in the waiting room, the major and I prowl among the tables where fly-blown magazines have lain undisturbed for six months. "Mr. Attlee in Washington"—my eye catches the headline, and it seems to me that everything which has happened since—all that tender sea, those sun-soaked rocks—belong to somebody else's mind. The English atmosphere closes in, isolating us safely from the incomprehensible oddities of other races. Even the brides, I think, felt it as one discovers the chill in the first autumn day. The eldest ostentatiously displayed *Time and Tide* as one might draw attention to a recent decoration. The others worked their way painfully through the sandwiches. If they were English they must be good. But in so far as it is possible to differentiate between one screech and another it seemed to me that some of the joy had gone from their voices and that fear had entered their little black eyes.

"Funny lot these foreigners," the major said as we drove into Rome. The bus made so much noise that we were shouting at each other as if across a field. "What did you make of the situation in Greece?"

"Pretty grim, sir."

"Dim? I don't see anything dim about it."

"No, grim, sir." Then to placate him, "You seem to have done a wonderful job with the Army, sir. The way they marched in step!"

"Ha!" He blushed happily. "Spit and polish, you know. Spit and polish."

The landscape was like an 18th century print; even the houses seemed to be mere decoration. The brides were singing again.

"Can't think they'll go down particularly well on the Great North Road, sir."

He looked at me suspiciously. "How d'you know they're going to the Great North Road?" I tried to turn and look at them, but the major tapped me sharply on the knee. "I shouldn't do that if I were you. Doesn't do to encourage 'em."

* * *

They revived at the hotel in Rome. We dined in a marble palace: plaster palms swarmed up the rococo walls and met in abundant foliage on the ceiling. In a corner four timid Italians played the hogwash tunes of the Thirties: white-coated waiters pounced to obey the least gesture of the Milords. This perhaps was how the brides had thought of England—a race of millionaires dining perpetually in an Aladdin's cave and waited on by soft-footed slaves. I thought of the reality—the fish queues, haggard faces in tubes, yesterday's buns—and pity touched me again. Forty feet away the brides were rolling ecstatically on their chairs; their voices rose above the obsequious chords of a waltz. Catching my eye they raised their glasses, they waved and flapped their hands in my direction, and a gleam of gold lit up the dimness of the room. Two tables away the major was talking to a subaltern. "He went half-way down the pitch," I heard him say, "and smacked the ball clean into the players' pavilion . . ."

The next morning the brides had provided themselves with bags of oranges, which they shook excitedly under our noses. The English froze with disapproval. We had been joined that morning by three pale English wives who sat in frigid isolation and with long, averted faces. Each had a fur coat slung over the left arm and in the right hand was a little jewel case. "No, thank you," they said to the oranges. "Cheerio!" the eldest bride said beseechingly. "No, thank you," the wives repeated. Looking at them, memories of childhood came back to me—lemonade on rectory lawns, the thud of tennis balls. "No, thank you," they said. The thin red line stood firm; the brides retired under its withering fire.

* * *

At the airport the old atmosphere closed in on us again, fortifying the English, silencing the brides. The wailing stopped as we reached the Sussex coast. At Croydon, buns and sandwiches were imprisoned under glass and the tea was brewing in shining vats. Priest-like stewardesses guarded us. The wireless bawled. "Smith has the ball, he passes to Bennett, Bennett kicks to Adams. Adams takes it." The voice gabbles with excitement. "Adams is down. No. Yes. No." A roar fills the ante-room. The priestesses lead us out one by one; now only the eldest bride faces me across the room. Frightened, crushed, she sits on the edge of her chair holding on to her bag of presents. No answering gleam welcomes my smile and two muddy tears have stuck in the rouge on her cheeks. What can I say to her? What comfort can I give—I who can foresee the future? "This way," one of the priestesses says to her. She points vainly towards the door and adds, "Parlez-vous français?" Determinedly the bride shakes her head. "Non. Non. Non. Je ne parle pas français. Je parle Anglais. Anglais! Jolly good chap!" Then hugging her bag, the tears puddling down her cheeks, she makes towards the door.

Outside, in the meek sunshine, I find the major happily smoking. "Well, it's nice to be back," he says, as we get into the bus. Looking proudly at the grey nissen huts, he adds, "Nothing like it, is there? Give me the old country, any day."

HUGH MASSINGHAM

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

No one should miss the splendid exhibition of American art now at the Tate. What unfolds is of supreme interest. A tragedy in four acts.

Act One. *Once-upon-a-time.* Colonial America. Provincial tranquillity, art not to be distinguished from late 18th century and early 19th century England, Gilbert Stuart, Copley, Benjamin West, P.R.A. Here the technique is still British, the sitter European—except perhaps No. 43. Copley's *Boy With a Squirrel* where there is a certain vivid generous impulsiveness in the face, a hint of "junior"—but there is yet neither American art nor an American type.

Act Two. *Romantic America.* This is the high moment. There is just a suspicion here—more than suspicion—that great art is about to be born. *Reverentia!* For the key fits the lock. On the one hand there is the technique—the loving seriousness, the vision, the pantheistic extravagance of the great age of romanticism—and on the other the subject, the American wilderness, the huge continent of rolling, deciduous forest, mountain, lake and river, Indian and buffalo, perhaps the most perfect romantic subject ever presented to those civilised high-thinking rebels in their lonely quest for nature. Look at (2) Allston's *Deluge* (1804), Cole's (42) *John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (it is a pity his Connecticut landscape *Oxbow* is not here)—then look at (66), Durand's *Kindred Spirits*, (the painters Cole and Bryant in 1849). This painting is

like a Wordsworth sonnet or a page of Chateaubriand —from a jutting rock the "Vates Amici" survey the uninhabited wooded ranges, the waterfalls in the golden light of what would seem a moment of infinite promise. And what a moment it is—"all nature is new to Art," wrote Cole, "No Tivolis, Ternis, Montblancs, Plynlimmons, hackneyed and worn by the daily pencils of hundreds, but primeval forest, virgin lakes and waterfalls". Look now at some of the anonymous pictures (3) the astonishing *Buffalo Hunter* (1830), (5) *Portrait of a Woman* (1830)—here is the American face, in its first breathtaking newness. The *Quilting Party* (6) and (7) *The Runaway Horse*, which seems the wild spirit of Romanticism itself in flight from the rising urban background. And now look at (19) *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* by George Bingham (*cir.* 1845). Of this picture James Soby writes: "A haunting and haunted masterpiece. In its almost Oriental economy, its wonderful atmospheric effects, its soft gradation of space, its sensitivity to the light, air and glassy motion of the river—in all these, it is an unforgettable work of art. The ghostly pirogue slides into view from nowhere; its figures stare straight at their audience and in the prow sits the Poe-like bear, object of civilisation's wonder and curiosity and symbol of the Fur-Trader's hardy, free life in the great woods." He might have added that in the centre lounges Huck Finn.

And now the tragedy—the end of contemplation; of Audubon's bird paradise and man's new Eden. The Civil War, the Carpet-Baggers, the rush for dollars, the vast European immigration, the felling of the forests, the extinction of the Indian, the slaughter of the buffalo, the degradation of the artist; railways, saloons, factories, slums, paupers and millionaires, in a word, Success!

* * *

Act Three. *Aftermath.* But soft, who comes here? Is it not Parisian Whistler—with his pale Battersea Bridge (No. 239), his two motionless *Nocturnes*, his two brittle girlhood *Harmonies;* there is no longer anything remotely American about this fastidious Chinese stillness—and over there, (Nos. 37—40) in the pure Impressionist tradition, are the honourable French paintings of Mary Cassatt (her father, I believe, was President of the Pennsylvania Railroad). And surely, all along that end wall spreads our great English enigma and Park Lane Velasquez, represented by his two familiar Dandies, *Horseback* and *Heartbreak* (Lord Ribblesdale and Mr. Graham Robertson). These three artists are the flower of American painting during the last half of the 19th century. It's no good pretending (as the Director of the Tate courteously maintains) that Homer, Eakins, and Ryder can hold a cuspidor to them! Homer's *Gulfstream* is indeed an astonishing prevision of Hemingway's Key West romances, a work of passionate realism but more than faintly magaziny, while Eakins seems but another honest Victorian who never saw the Seine. Ryder is a belated Calvert-like romantic, yet his *Dead Bird* (177) (which took ten years, 1890—1900) is strangely moving. But there is no doubt that for the great ones the climate of this new dollar-glutted America was unbearable and to pretend that they lost anything by expatriating themselves is mere nationalist cant. (Both Henry James and Henry Adams remained acutely aware of the nature of this American tragedy.) Perhaps the strange Peyronnet-like *Meditation by the Sea* (1860. Anonymous. No. 4) is the most forlorn exhibit from this later period. One misses also Heade's *Storm Approaching Larchmont Bay* of 1868.

And now Act Four. *Retribution!* Or *Too Late?* Shattered by sixty years of quantitative Philistinism the American Art World tries to atone. Guilty millionaires flock to endow Galleries and scholarships, Newspapers boost American talent, primitives are discovered and collected, the W.P.A. frescoes small Town-Halls and Country Post Offices; every kind of trick and ism flourishes; ignorant but well-nourished armies of artists argue in paint. The result seems lamentable—lamentable, I hasten to say, as a War Artists' exhibition or a *Salon d'Automne*—but we must not grieve too much:

"Pity, that busy monster, manunkind,
Not. His progress is a comfortable disease."

Let us investigate a little further. Bellows, no. Benton, no. Blume, no. (These are marks on my catalogue). Burchfield, no. A disappointment—he seems a more whimsical and weaker Piper. Cadmus, one example only, but very American. Too raw. Bilshemius, no. Another disappointment. Feiringer, no. Glackens, pleasant, Sickertian. Graves, Klee type, interesting. Gropper, Grosz, Levine—satirical realists, no. Hopper, sinister atmospherical realist, no. Kane, *Self-portrait* (No. 125), so often reproduced, up to and beyond expectations. "Pop" Hart. Nice. Pickett. (165) *Manchester Valley* (1914-1918) Yes. Yes. An American primitive which with child-like intensity conveys the clear, cold, gritty winter atmosphere of the Pittsburgh suburbs. Ben Shahn. Yes. Something extremely satisfying about the Composition of his *Handball* (190) and *Liberation* (191). Original and Classical. Sloan. Good American. Watkins, no. Weber, no. Wood. (234) *Daughters of the Revolution* (1932) Yes. Yes. Yes. I never dared expect to see this masterpiece in the original. What moon-like surfaces! What divine flatness! The rimless pince-nez, the long upper lips, the paper-clip mouths of the three complacent Furies! There is hope at long last—something will be born out of all this encouragement, endowment and appreciation (the picture is owned by Edward G. Robinson), from the enthusiasm of so many good people who want something to be born. But what? What will the Museum of Modern Art—that admirable incubator—or the millionaire patrons—or the Hollywood Colossus, or the new and so encouraging art criticism of Soby, Sweeney, Barr, Janis, etc., or the high-pressure campaigns of *Time and Life*, or the awards of the big provincial Art Galleries bring forth? Perhaps Allbright's revolting, post-Raphaelite, *fin de millénium*, painstaking (it took from 1931-1941) pain-shedding, problem picture, (No. 1) is the answer. But I think whatever should materialise will be worth waiting for.

CYRIL CONNOLLY

STRAUSS AT EIGHTY

We were all curious last week to hear the new work by Richard Strauss which the enterprise of Mr. Boyd Neel had brought to performance at Chelsea—more curious, perhaps, than we should have been on a similar occasion before the war. It was partly the feeling that a cultural "iron curtain" was being raised; partly the reflection (which will have occurred to others besides myself) that the current denigration of this composer's work had long passed all rational limits. I am always reading articles which tell me what is wrong with Strauss; and I should take them more seriously if the writers did not invariably forget to mention one important fact: that, in spite of all the disappointments of his output during the past twenty-five years, Richard Strauss is after all the most considerable of living composers.

But as the performance of *Metamorphosen* proceeded, curiosity deepened into astonishment. The work, which lasts for half an hour, is described as "a study for 23 solo strings," and we fancied we knew what to expect: immense fluency and accomplishment, coupled with banality of material and poverty of emotional content. But a breach had somehow or other been torn in the cynical commercialism which has so long immured Strauss's imagination; perhaps by his great age, his isolation during the war years, and the shattering emotional experience through which even the most sheltered of Germans must have passed. The piece is subscribed "*In memoriam* April 1945," and is a lament for the death of Germany—or of the old Europe, if you like, for music is blessedly imprecise in such details. A single phrase from the *Eroica* funeral march is interwoven with a number of original themes to form a passionate elegy—an enormous slow movement of continuous polyphony, packed with invention and device, but never arid or mechanical. For composers like Elgar and Strauss, whose make-up contains a marked element of vulgarity, the absence of brass is often a blessing; and the texture of *Metamorphosen*, though perhaps too continuously rich, is neither coarse nor lush. Played badly, it would soon weary the ear; but the Boyd Neel Orchestra excelled themselves, and I am delighted to learn that their glowing performance of this intricate score is to be perpetuated on records.

The Sadler's Wells chorus are a more effective body in Rosebery Avenue than in the nave of St. Bartholomew's. During Palestrina's *Stabat Mater* gratitude for their enterprise and indeed all other impressions whatever were swamped by the awful fascination of wondering how much further the pitch was going to drop; and I could not help admiring the poker faces of conductor and singers as they steamed into port *a whole fourth* (believe it or not) below the key of the opening. *Pace* the critic of *The Times* (who avers the exact opposite), the remainder of the programme suffered from the same trouble, the only difference being the extent of the landslide in each instance: the average was a tone to a minor third. When Britten's lovely *Hymn to Saint Cecilia* fetched up in D instead of E, it was positively comic to watch the basses piously pretending to sing the very low key-note sustained through the final bars, when they were in fact singing next to nothing.

But it wasn't only in the matter of pitch that the unfortunate composers found themselves (if you will forgive the phrase) let down. Quality of tone was sadly disregarded, and so was balance. In the second of Holst's beautiful and unjustly neglected *Two Psalms*, there is a moment where the tune passes to the violins (represented on this occasion by the organ) while the choir have wisps of sixths and thirds drifting past underneath and marked *pp leggiero;* these passages were sung so coarsely and so loudly as to drown the melody. In the circumstances it seems hardly fair to express any very decided opinion on the new Rubbra *Mass* which was the novelty of the occasion. At St. Bartholomew's it sounded like a piece of solid, sober, neo-academic work, with some rather widely spaced out moments of inspiration; but we may well feel quite differently about it when we hear it performed in tune and in a choral style appropriate to its content.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

In the course of a week's visit to the Paris studios of the Radiodiffusion française I was enabled, through the kindness of that organisation, to gain a fair idea of the sort of experiments in radio technique which have been made there since the Liberation. It is characteristic of French enterprise in matters of art that they should already have a Programme C (called the Club d'Essai), although the results of the German occupation were far more disastrous, in depleting technical facilities than anything we suffered here. In talking to outside people I discovered a good deal of dissatisfaction with the "home service" of the Radiodiffusion, on the grounds that there was too much chamber music and talks, and also because (it was alleged) inferior artists were constantly being employed for personal reasons. Of the truth or untruth of these assertions, I am in no position to judge; but I had plenty of occasion, during my visit, to admire the galaxy of intelligence, imagination, taste and technical skill with which M. Jean Tardieu (himself a poet of distinction) has surrounded himself as director of the Club d'Essai. In listening to a number of programmes which were played over to me, and in particular to the transmission of my own radio opera, *The Rescue*, I was struck especially by two features: the liberal use of sound-effects and a much more rhetorical type of acting than we are used to in English radio. The first is a matter of taste, the second a matter of nationality. I could not always feel that the sound-effects, although they were very carefully managed, contributed much to the image aimed at. A fantasy called *La Baraque Baroque* did, it is true, translate the world of Disney very successfully into the invisible medium; but the slowing-up produced, in a straight play, by too elaborate a sound texture, and the almost total absence of fading (a device indispensable to our own radio-dramatic technique), resulted in some lack of clarity in the articulation of the sequences. As for the voices, the French style gains in consistency of effect what it loses in intimacy: a certain loudness and flamboyancy are inseparable from the speaking of the language, and in dramatic poetry or poetic prose the high-

pitched eloquence seemed in place. Nevertheless, I feel that a school of radio acting such as the B.B.C. commands, which would mean a break with the tradition of the Comédie Française, might make the longer types of programme more varied and therefore easier to listen to.

The situation with regard to writers for the medium seems much what it is here. With few exceptions the more distinguished poets and playwrights ignore radio as unworthy of their talents. Cocteau, who should be able to do so much in it, prefers the films; Mauriac, Gide, do not appear any more interested. That brilliant dramatist and most perceptive intellect, André Obey, has, I believe, contributed several features; but the one I heard, on the death of Louis XIV, was by English standards, old-fashioned in method, and without much literary value. Apart from an extremely good shortened version of Hamlet, by far the most striking short piece I heard was an adaptation, by Maurice Cazenave, of Sartre's horrific story, *La Chambre*. This play, which tells of a madman haunted by statues, was acted with great intensity, above all by the principal, Michel Vitold, a young actor who created the male character in Sartre's stage play, *Huis Clos*, and performed the part of the sinister clown, Irus, in *The Rescue*, with an insane gusto that took my breath away. As an "Appointment with Fear" *La Chambre* is hair-raising and ought certainly to be produced over here—perhaps in Programme C.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, June 30th.* Concert (3 p.m.); The Open Window (4.30 p.m.); Recital (6.15 p.m.); The Old Order Changes (7 p.m.); UNRRA (9.30 p.m.); Choral Suite (11.3 p.m.).

Monday, July 1st. Stories Old and New (4.45 p.m.); Travelling in the Soviet Union (7.45 p.m.); Quartet (11.25 p.m.).

Tuesday, July 2nd. Wesley (10 a.m. L.P.)

Wednesday, July 3rd. Toscanini (7.30 and 9.15 p.m.).

Thursday, July 4th. String Orchestra (7.25 p.m.).

Friday, July 5th. Home-made Telescopes (6.20 p.m.); The Walls are Down (9.30 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"O.S.S." at the Plaza

"Make Mine Music!" at the New Gallery and Tivoli

O.S.S. attempted to do for the Office of Strategic Services what, with far less promising material, *The House on 42nd Street* did for the F.B.I. Despite a brisk beginning it works out rather tamely; dead dialogue; few authentic thrills except for an occasional situation and the bits from newsreels. Neither the drama nor the documentary has been given its full value. Yet the exploits of these men and women, parachuted into France to act as spies and saboteurs, ought to have made a film as exciting and moving as any produced by the war.

Stop press. The new Disney consists of ten musical turns. Two winners: *The Whale Who Wanted to Sing at the Met* (a delightful grotesque), *All the Cats Join In* (a jitterbug cartoon in which pencils and Benny Goodman's jazz play the leading parts). Below them, *Peter and the Wolf* (music by Prokofieff), *Johnny Fedora and Alice Blue Bonnet* (bandbox prettiness), and *The Martins and the Coys* (backwoods ballad). The rest is lukewarm knockabout and slipslop tone poem. The whole thing improves on *Three Caballeros*, but is nothing like as stirring as *Fantasia*. Except for the jitterbug sequences, Disney breaks no new ground, and seems content with turning out a factory product as slick as possible.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

BALLET

The new décor for *Giselle* at Covent Garden, reproduces an original design, in which I admire greatly the distant shining castle, but less the orange and gold so lavishly spilt over the scene and costumes by Mr. James Bailey, the young artist whose first essay this is in stage work. The first provokes certain prosaic questions. Why must the Duke of Courland and his Duchess, I mean his daughter, go hunting in solid Renaissance costumes cluttered with jewels and brocade, when they might have worn lovely and lavish Victorian riding-habits? I wondered, as usual, at the capacity of such prodigious swells to crush through the traditionally exiguous doorway of Giselle's great-grandmother's cottage, at the exaggerated adolescence of Albrecht and the forest of old Hilarion's beard; but also at the beauty of Margot Fonteyn's dancing and the brilliance of the *corps de ballet*. This was still more in evidence in the lovely moon-cold tropical jungle of Act II, in which also Alexis Rasine, as Albrecht, had grown up and looked and danced finely. Beryl Grey was a dazzling Queen and Gillian Lynne and Moira Shearer alluring leaders of the Wilis. Margot Fonteyn danced only more beautifully than the Wilis (levitated by Mr. Kirby, the flying expert) flew. Only three flew, but they seemed to people the upper air of the glade. I would name them, but I hear that you must not be too light, or you may never land again. The orchestration of the movement throughout this act was unusually beautiful.

After various alarums and excursions Serge Lifar arrived in time to join his New Monte Carlo Ballet in its first performance at the Cambridge Theatre. Coming so soon after the great artistic success of the young Ballets des Champs Elysées this company made a very disappointing impression. There is no lack of good dancing, nor choreographic invention nor elegant decors, but these may be uninteresting and even exasperating without sincerity of artistic direction. In *Dramma per Musica* Lifar has planted a pointless story upon an exquisite Cantata of Bach, the musical texture and emotional content of which is completely ignored. *Romeo and Juliet*, though less insulting to one's musical taste, showed an equal disregard for the dynamics of Tchaikowsky's music. The *Polovtzian Dances* from *Prince Igor* were rapturously received, no doubt by those who do not remember the magnificent power of the original, of which they are but an elegant shadow. Janine Charrat, the very gifted choreographer of *Jeu de Cartes*, one of the high lights of the Ballet des Champs Elysées' season, danced well as Juliet; so did Yvette Chauvire as the Lady and Edmond Audran as the Messenger in *Dramma per Musica*; and Alexandre Kaliounjy as the Polvtzian Chief in *Prince Igor* gave a striking performance. BERYL DE ZOETE

THEATRE

"La Maison de Bernarda," at the Mercury Theatre, is the last play Garcia Lorca wrote before he was murdered in Granada. Unlike the work of some poets, it is good theatre and thoroughly actable. It is the Rapuntzel-like story of five daughters shut up by a cruel proud mother away from all contact with men; each longs for a husband or a lover, and for the child which is denied her. The cast is entirely feminine, and tremendous forces of thundery frustration and hatred are released, which end in suicide.

Lorca, from childhood on, was deeply preoccupied with peasant drama, and this, like all good folk and fairy tales as well as classic tragedy, expresses—sometimes by ritual and fantastic symbols, sometimes openly—brutalities and obscenities normally hidden deep in the subconscious. Each character in "Bernarda" is almost a Freudian section of personality—the insane, somewhat obscene grandmother who escapes from locked rooms, the repressed and repressing mother, preoccupied only with honour, prudence, and what people will think, and the neurotic daughters who hover between the two.

The atmosphere both of Spain and of sultry waiting for violence is beautifully suggested by the scenery, lighting and sound effects. These young actors do give an utterly sincere and at times very moving performance, and Mlle Germaine Michel's clear-cut study of an old almost pagan peasant woman is thoroughly convincing.

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Correspondence

MORALS AND POLITICS

SIR,—Morals and politics, as you say in your article, are now inseparably linked, but their relation involves issues far wider than those discussed in the *Polemic* editorial to which you referred. In fact, the very narrowing down of the question to the issue between private conscience and public duty is a device used there to prevent any adequate discussion of my original article in the *Modern Quarterly*. What I tried to do in that article was not only, and not even mainly, to discuss questions of morality. It was rather an attempt to put down briefly, simply and coherently the beliefs and principles of action appropriate to our time. As I put them down they are a personal expression, but whether that expression is adequate or not, they aim at represen'ng what is new and vital in human affairs. The struggle between these ideas and the older ones they are supplanting is going on all the time in the field of action without necessarily any formulation or even any understanding of them by either supporters or opponents; nevertheless the explicit statement of them in the *Modern Quarterly*, and more widely in the B.B.C.'s *Challenge of Our Time*, has provoked a degree of reaction that shows there is here something real to argue about.

Now it is characteristic that the argument so far, with the exception of your article, has been carried out not on the major issues involved but on side issues, quibbles and deliberate distortions of meaning, some of which you pointed out. The editor of *Polemic* complains of my bad English (he has succeeded in discovering two misprints) and my vague expressions, but it is plain from the way he writes that he knows well enough what I am driving at. There is little argument but plenty of direct and oblique abuse of the Soviet Union and of those that support its policies. Now to substitute hatred of the Soviet Union for all attempts to think out and solve our own problems is dangerous intellectual and political irresponsibility. It is dangerous intellectually, as the *Challenge of Our Time* broadcasts amply show, because it leads to the abandonment of all the scientific gains of the last century and a return to uncritical faith. It is even more dangerous politically because it aims at creating an atmosphere of incomprehension and hostility between East and West, which, unless it is checked, will lead inevitably to a third world war. How far that incitation has gone is shown by the attitude of that former pacifist liberal Bertrand Russell, who now writes:—

> While America alone possesses the secret this advantage should be used, not for national aggrandisement, but to compel acquiescence in a monopoly of atomic power in the hands of an international authority. It is clear that Russia will not submit to any international control except as a result of fear. Any step, therefore, that lessens Russia's occasions for fear tends to prevent that internationalisation of this weapon which we must all desire.—(*Picture Post*, June 15th, 1946).

The alternative to this attitude is not submission to Red dictation or the following of a mythical party line. It is, I maintained, to try to work out our own pattern of belief and action based on a democratic and scientific humanism: one which recognises the state of the world as it is after the defeat of the Nazis. The basic need is to reconcile an organised, socialised production mechanism, necessary for physical survival and well being, with a democratic spontaneous activity which must interfuse it if it is to allow and help men to develop to the full their own individualities. The solution to this problem must involve changes in understanding and values no less revolutionary than the changes in politics and technique. I contested, however, that these moral and intellectual questions cannot be treated in isolation, but as part of the whole process. In fifteen pages it is, of course, absurd to hope to *expound* such a thesis. The most I hoped for was to *indicate* its main lines. This limitation of space was the main reason for the cloudiness of language which you condemn. I know from my own experience of practical social science how complex even the simplest of human situations are, and yet I still think simple formulations have their value in helping one to see the whole picture in outline.

In this respect, however, I think you have been less than fair to me. You ask questions as to what I mean by "the majority of the people can be trusted: no superior or élite group can be." In my paper I devote over a page to just such an explanation. Of course it deserves volumes, but when will they be written and how many will read them? Briefly, and therefore inadequately, I tried to indicate the new concept of an integral working day-to-day democracy "covering both the economic and political fields, and, also, sufficiently widespread so that every member of society can take an active part in it. 'Every cook must learn to rule the State.'" Again, I tried to make clear just what I meant by an élite: a group separated from society by a belief in their superiority. Clearly, at least in times of stress, there must be leaders and parties, but the whole weight of Lenin's teaching and practice was for a party coming from the people, learning from it and drawing its strength from it.

Why, I wonder, do you find it so "cloudy" of me to say "we are at the beginning of a new era in which the people, at last firmly in power, can plan and act"? I was writing, it is true, very soon after the defeat of Fascism and before the new wave of reaction and suspicion had grown to its present proportions. But I still believe it is a simple and true statement. Democracy, except for favoured regions like France Spain, is the universal form of government, and I have enough faith in it to believe that it will recover from disorder and famine and ensure peace.

I had hoped, and still hope, that those who read what I have written, as meaning what it says, and not what political spite can read into it, will see that there is a way of keeping the world from flying asunder into two hostile camps: that the peoples will find it, and that we will be able to get on with the job of making a world worth living in.

J. D. BERNAL

Birkbeck College, E.C.4.

Sir,—I had hoped that Kingsley Martin was going to avoid the usual pitfalls when he quite rightly observed: "The end will always justify the means if the end is good and the means adapted to promote it." That of course is the crux of the matter. But in his last sentence he contradicts himself by asserting that in pursuing those ends we must confine ourselves to "means that are *in themselves* good" (my italics). The muddle arises because two standards of judgment exist. By one standard we judge the end as good. But we then judge the means not, as we should, by whether it really promotes that end, but by whether it conforms to certain moral principles. We ask: are the means good *in themselves*, irrespective of their consequences? But, as Professor Field reminds us in his *Moral Theory*, to call the means by which good is achieved, *evil*, is meaningless "because if good comes of it, and it was done with that intention, it cannot be evil." In other words there can be no criterion of right or wrong other than that by which we judge the consequences; and if the consequences are right, taking into full account of course all the indirect results that the adoption of these means will produce as well as the direct results, the end itself, then the means are thereby judged to be right too.

There is therefore no question of overriding the conscience but rather of making it more ethical than it would be if it ignored the total consequences and only considered the means in complete isolation. It is because conscience is so fallible that it cannot be made "the *whole* basis of ethics". This has been abundantly shown not only by all students of ethics,

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but by recent psychology which has "unmasked the pretensions of conscience as the perfect guide", and shown how much harm it is capable of doing. When we ask a man to pass beyond his personal ethical judgment that taxation is confiscation and therefore robbery to considerations of group interests we are not asking him to violate his conscience, but to be more conscientious, not to be less moral but to be more moral.

It is precisely in this sense that *individual* behaviour is not enough. It is not enough for the slave master to be personally kind to his slaves, for the rich man to send bundles of old clothes to the unemployed, for the benevolent to send individual food parcels to India. These virtues, as Bernal said, "need reorientating in the direction of social responsibility." It is more moral to abolish slavery, to institute full employment, to ration bread and supply India by communal effort. What the undeveloped conscience may feel to be morally wrong or at any rate may not feel to be a duty lying beyond *personal* kindliness, the instructed conscience will accept because it is the necessary means to attain a good end.

As to the two further problems of whether the community has the right to override those who conscientiously object, and as to who has the right to give "authoritative interpretations of group interest", they are of great importance but can only be considered usefully when the basic ethical questions have been cleared up. JOHN LEWIS

Sir,—I recently received evidence from Italy which seems to refute Mr. Sewell's opinion that there is no Papal "party line". Renzo Gulizia, the ex-partisan, of whom I wrote in an article in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of April 20th, informs me that immediately prior to the referendum, all the priests in the Abruzzi preached sermons strongly urging their "flock" to vote for the Monarchy rather than the Republic. Some even went so far as to threaten that anyone voting Republican would be ineligible for the sacraments and would be debarred from joining in religious festivals. Gulizia states that hundreds of devout peasants, who wished to vote for the Republic, refrained from doing so for fear of going to hell. Yet Communism was not the issue in the referendum, for even the Christian Democratic Party Executive had voted in favour of the Republic.

The Pope's present attitude is not surprising in view of his past record. He has given his blessing to both the dictators Franco and Peron, and not a word of Papal condemnation was uttered during twenty years of Fascism in Italy. There is abundant evidence that he has always preferred Fascism to Communism, and now it appears that, in his view, Fascist dictatorships and discredited monarchs are still preferable to genuine democracy. If this is not a "party line", I should like to know what is. But I doubt whether anyone, even the most devout Catholic, who has lived in a Fascist-occupied country, as I did for several months, would willingly vote for anything which might lead to a recurrence of that regime. Anyway, twelve million Italians decided to risk hell fire for a Republic. IAN REID

THE COLONIAL SERVICE

SIR,—I resigned recently from the Colonial Service after having spent the best part of ten years as an Administrative Officer in N. Nigeria and the Gambia. I wish I could make people in England realise the present state of opinion in the Colonial Service. For unless something is done to improve matters very soon I and many others consider we shall end up in disaster.

One is continually hearing of various plans and schemes for bringing on the colonial peoples in the Empire, but little is heard of the officials who are to carry out these schemes. And if they are working under unsatisfactory conditions and feel frustrated, what chance is there that the policy they are going to carry out will be a success?

The main trouble is, no doubt, that the ordinary official has absolutely no idea of the policy, if any, that is being aimed at, much less of the part he is supposed to be playing in carrying it out. It would be hard to find a collection of individuals who are more ready to be keen on their work than those in the Colonial Service, but nearly all this enthusiasm is frittered away.

Officers are shunted from one post to another, merely to fit in with the comings and goings of other officers on leave, and with absolutely no regard to the personal likes or abilities and with even less to the desires of the native peoples we are looking after. There is absolutely no continuity, though everyone agrees that one of the chief tasks of an Administrative Officer is to get to know, be understood by and interpret the desires of the native peoples of whom he is in charge. But it is unusual for an officer to be left in the same station for a whole tour of 18 months, let alone for more than a tour. Between 1940 and 1944, for instance, there were at least eleven different officers in charge of the important Emirate division of Adamawa and between April 1945 and April 1946, there were at least four different Commissioners of the small division of Georgetown in the Gambia. These instances could be repeated time without number in any station in the West Coast. It is little wonder that natives, from Emirs and District Heads to the ordinary Audu in the bush, bewildered by the many changes, come to us and beg to know the reason why they cannot be left in peace to get to know one European at a time instead of having to start again every three months or so.

The actual conditions of recruitment cause an undue amount of anxiety and heart-burning. Most officers when they first join the Colonial Service are unmarried and are absolutely ignorant of the kind of life that is in store for them. All sorts of things may occur to change a young officer's views on holding an appointment abroad—marriage, children, ill-health, a gradual dislike of colonial conditions or a general feeling of unsuitability. But once in the Service, every barrier is placed to prevent an officer escaping. The recent proposals outlined by the Colonial Office, admirable in themselves, mainly deal with recruitment and therefore barely reach the crux of the matter, for the process of disintegration begins after training. After that, year by year losing touch more and more with conditions in England, should he decide to resign, an officer loses all his pension rights and, unless he is a bachelor, all the money he has paid into the Widows' and Orphans' Fund—a financial burden few can afford to carry. So inevitably a considerable number of officers, who have lost all interest in their work and in the country, nevertheless decide to stick it out because they cannot afford to do anything else. This state of mind is not exactly conducive to efficient and keen service. Why cannot officers be released with a proportionate pension, after, say, ten years instead of doggedly dragging on, doing good neither to themselves nor anybody else, until they are fifty?

The tragedy of the whole thing is that this is happening just exactly at the time when public opinion in the colonies is bounding ahead towards new and ambitious ideals and instead of attempting to bridge the ever-widening gap, the administration generally is sunk into a trough of apathy and frustration, with no guiding impulse to move in in any direction at all. At the same time, the Colonial Office is labouring, short-staffed as ever, to cope with all the new problems caused by the war, far too set in its ways to be able to spare the time to instil any sort of inspiration into a demoralised service. S. E. BRADSHAW

PLOT OF JULY 20TH

Sir,—Your issue of June 15th contains its usual slighting reference to my views on Germany. We are both used to this, and I am well able to bear your criticism now that the Government has at long last adopted the federal solution of the German problem,

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which I have been preaching for years. Your repetition of the old assertion that the theme of my writings has been that "there were not only virtually no 'good Germans' nor ever had been" is merely silly. You know perfectly well that I have never said anything like that.

I must, however, criticise you in turn, because your correspondent of June 15th is misleading the public with your sanction. He suggests that, after all, there was a German resistance movement. Throughout the war I denied that there was anything worthy of the name. When the Allies got into Germany, General Eisenhower fully confirmed all that I had said.

Your correspondent seeks to bolster up a fallacious suggestion by quoting the plot of July 20th, 1944. It failed partly through mismanagement, mainly because it had no roots; and it is probably well that it failed for the following reason. Some of my personal acquaintances were in it. One of them—I am glad to say he escaped—has several times told me how impossible he found it to impress upon the others that the Allies meant what they said by "unconditional surrender." The rest went into the plot—when all was lost—to remove Hitler with a view to a negotiated peace, which would have preserved the influence of the military members, who were its most essential part. Such a development would have been an embarrassment rather than an advantage to the Allies. On any long view it was better to win the war outright.

VANSITTART

[Critic comments on this letter in the London Diary.—ED., *N.S.&N.*].

POLES AND THE MINES

SIR,—I feel that some comment is necessary on the notes by "Critic" on the employment of Poles in the mines of this country, which appear in the current issue of your paper. He asks whether my statement to the Press on this question represents the views of the Federation (now the National Union of Mineworkers). I can assure him that the statement I made is in conformity with the policy of the Executive Committee of the Union, although the matter will be reviewed at the Annual Conference which will have taken place before this letter appears.

It would have been more helpful if "Critic" had made himself acquainted with the facts before rushing into print. The attitude of the National Union of Mineworkers has been made prefectly clear to the Minister of Fuel and Power. Several months ago, the Union during an interview with the Minister, offered to consider the employment of prisoners of war, but the suggestion was flatly rejected.

The attitude of the Union to the employment of foreign labour in the pits is clear. The introduction of such labour will only be entertained if certain conditions are fulfilled, one of the most important of which is that such recruits shall be the first to leave the mines if redundancy occurs under the big reorgansation that is to take place under Nationalisation.

We also require from the Government certain guarantees that the Miners' Charter shall be introduced "in accordance with a progressive plan." We want to build a mining industry based on sure foundations, and it does not help when uninformed commentaries as Critic's appear in such an influential journal as THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

WILL LAWTHER

ELECTIONS IN SLOVAKIA

Sir,—It is a pity that Mr. Ernest Davies's excellent report on the post-election situation in Czechoslovakia was marred by a misstatement about the general strike in Bratislava. I was in Bratislava during the strike and listened to all the speeches made to the strikers from the balcony of the Municipal Theatre, and I afterwards interviewed the secretary of the trade unions on the cause of the strike. It was not called by the Communists to protest against the Democrat Party victory in Slovakia; it was called to protest against recent outbreaks of Slovak nationalism aimed at the unity of the Czechoslovak Republic. On May 31st there was a particularly ugly outbreak: Slovak nationalists stopped a game in which Czech footballers were the visiting side and invaded the field with shouts of "Out with the Czechs!" On the following morning the Bratislava Works Councils met and called a general strike to show that the workers of Bratislava were not a party to this chauvinism. Indeed, one of the speakers at the strike demonstration was a representative of the Democrat Party, Schloss by name: he was as outspoken in his denunciation of the nationalists as was Zubka, the Communist trade union leader. A Slovak general who had witnessed the incident at the football match was also a speaker.

DAVID RAYMOND

VICTORY CONFERENCE

SIR,—I am sure all active-minded members of the Labour Party will agree with Mr. R. H. S. Crossman that we want future conferences to be "serious policy debates" and not just "victory demonstrations." But in view of the immensely increased prestige and power, which the platform will in future enjoy from the presence of Cabinet Ministers armed with exclusive information on the issues under discussion, it is clear that no individual "free lance," however brilliant, can hope to sway the conference against the platform on any major issue. And perhaps this is just as well.

The only corrective to the danger of the conference becoming a mere "rubber stamp" for Cabinet decisions is the creation among the delegates of a body of informed opinion, knowing what it wants and capable of holding its own with the platform. The obvious way to build this body of informed opinion is for Labour M.P.s and councillors, up and down the country, who feel like Mr. Crossman, to take the lead in the establishment of regular quarterly regional conferences covering convenient areas, dealing with the various aspects of party policy both at home and abroad. That the need for something of this sort is recognised by the National Executive is clear from recent statements by the Party Secretary, Mr. Morgan Phillips.

Two dangers confront victorious Labour. The first is the danger, at home, that having captured political power, our leaders may be captivated by the social and educational tradition of their political opponents and we allow ourselves to be diverted from our purpose of creating an educated democracy into palliative reforms, which merely broaden the basis of entrance into the ranks of the established ruling class. The second danger, abroad, is that, while rejecting co-operation with the forces of Communism, we fail to strengthen sufficiently the hands of our Socialist "opposite numbers" in the ranks of Social-Democracy and so frustrate the progressive forces altogether. But neither of these dangers need worry us unduly, provided delegates attending Annual Conference have had reasonable opportunities for discussing party policy together at a regional level.

Bristol. R. ST. JOHN READE

TATE GALLERY

SIR,—The paragraph by Roger Marvell "The London Museum" in your issue of June 1st, refers to the report on the Massey Committee and their recommendation, *inter alia*, for an annual grant to the Tate. It should be known, however, that the Committee's recommendation was forestalled by Government policy, as a purchase grant to the Tate Gallery was in fact covered by the 1946 Civil Estimates.

W. L. WOODS,
For Public Relations Officer.

W. H. MALLOCK

SIR,—We are anxious to trace the heirs and assigns or Literary Executors, if any, of the late W. H. Mallock (d. 1923), author of *The New Republic*, *The Old Order Changes*, etc., etc., and we should be most grateful for any information that your readers are able to give us.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

NOT long ago, I met an earnest English Nonconformist who had been travelling extensively in the Soviet Union, staying at collective farms and amongst ordinary people. He said that he had never before in his life seen the Christian spirit so manifest, such happy social life combined with economic communalism. Mr. Priestley came back with a similar report of the friendliness and happiness of the many farms and factories he visited over a wide area of the U.S.S.R. How are such reports to be squared with the appalling reports given by prisoners who have been released from Russia, and especially by Poles who were deported there in 1939? Is the explanation that one or the other is lying, or merely, as people say, that every traveller sees what he wants or expects to see in the Soviet Union? I believe that neither of these explanations is correct. Nations are not black or white, nor are they grey; they are black and white at the same time.

Consider what life was like in the mines or factories, or in the festering East End of London in the first half of the last century, and recall that the horrors of child labour revealed by Royal Commissions existed side by side with the world of cultured luxury in which any foreign visitor could find plenty of kindness and even Christianity. The "two nations" could exist side by side, and only a few crossed the impalpable barrier. Again in our own day, kindly, well-meaning British people have quite cheerfully tolerated animal poverty and periodic famine in India, for which as British citizens they were responsible and indirect beneficaries.

If such conditions can exist side by side in defiance of accepted democratic principles, it is far easier for them to do so in the immense territory of the Soviet Union. The point is admirably made by the anonymous Polish writer of *The Dark Side of the Moon*.* After describing the immense wastes of Siberia, where the climate is the most terrible in the world, she writes:

> It is within these unimaginable expanses, against these wastes of snow and sky, beneath the blind roofs of these primaeval forests, along these ice-bound waters and across these oceans of sand and steppe—and not against any background or upon any stage which may even conceivably be compared with what we know—that the events now to be recorded have taken, and are taking, place. For this reason, as for some others, much that is to be set down must at first sight appear startlingly unlike much else which has been already learnt of the Soviet Union; and which has received publicity.

Some, but only part, of the horrors described in this book can be explained by geography and the traditions of Tsarist rule in the almost incredible isolation of areas, which are farther removed from Moscow or Kiev than Warsaw is from London. A second factor, probably the most important of all, is that life has always been cheap in Asia and that Russians under Tsardom and Soviets alike, have suffered so much themselves that mass misery no longer produces reactions of pity. A third factor is that these Siberian regions are controlled by the N.K.V.D., who there guard in vast prison camps people who are regarded as criminals and pariahs. And here we reach the basic distinction between the tolerance of social injustice in a Western country and the deliberate retention of forced labour as a matter of policy in the Soviet Union. In the West, there was always the theory, partly derived from Christianity, but mainly from the humanist tradition of the last three centuries, that some rights of the individual were inalienable even if he had sinned or held subversive political doctrines. The reformers were people who tried, often unsuccessfully, to apply this theory to society as a whole. But among the official and influential class in the Soviet Union to-day, no such theory and no such reformers can exist.

According to the accepted morality of Leninism, to do right is to do that which is in the interests of Communism, and it is by definition criminal to oppose or obstruct the objects of the Communist State, which means the policy of the Communist Party. Therefore, the system of criminal justice, as we understand it, dealing with crimes against persons, such as murder or theft, is enlightened and reformist. But while theft of personal property is a comparatively venial sin, to damage Soviet production or to spread opinions that do not accord with State policy are crimes which automatically cut off the criminal from the community. Motives, which to Western ways of thinking are the test of guilt or innocence, are irrelevant. A man may even be a criminal by accident, since a tendency to have such accidents may be socially undesirable. And the socially undesirable are the business of the N.K.V.D. If they are children, they must be educated into social habits. If they are adults, they are likely to be classified as saboteurs or enemies of the State, utterly cut off from the rest of the body politic and sent to Northern Siberia, where they will perforce serve the community by compulsory labour until they die, or until they are "regenerated" by work.

Foreigners are likely to share the fate of Soviet criminals, since the theoretical Soviet doctrine that the capitalist world is necessarily hostile has been reinforced by much bitter experience. Xenophobia was strong in Tsarist Russia; to-day it is strengthened by Communist doctrine and experience. The author of *The Dark Side of the Moon* describes examinations by the N.K.V.D. in which ordinary Polish citizens were repeatedly badgered to confess all that they had done against the Soviet Union. "As if," as one witness complained, "you had nothing else in creation to think about!" "For whom are you spying?" was another reiterated question.

> These questions were not, as might be thought, put simply out of idleness or inspired by malice or intentional absurdity. They were believed to have a direct relation to fact. One man undergoing this kind of examination asked: "But you too have foreign visitors. Do you suppose they are all spies?" The answer was: "What do you think? Do you imagine we are so naïve as not to be perfectly aware of it?"

The N.K.V.D. liquidates social opposition and unconverted foreigners in the same spirit as the Church of Rome, when it was more powerful, persecuted heretics and launched crusades against infidels. In both cases compromise and even alliances with heresy are allowable if the power to stamp it out is lacking; in both cases the belief that truth is finally known and that salvation depends on its acceptance enables inquisitor or N.K.V.D. official to carry out his duties with a clear conscience. The Inquisitor and Comrade Gletkin both act from the highest motives of idealism.

The results of this doctrinal position follow inevitably. When the Russians arrived in Eastern Poland in September, 1939, the inhabitants first thought they had come to rescue them from the Germans. According to some accounts, crowds gathered in the streets to welcome the Red Army. These stories may be true; they are perfectly compatible with the undoubted fact that Poles, who possessed any property or were of the educated class, were deported by hundreds of thousands to northern or central Asia, from which an unknown proportion returned as part of the Stalin-Sikorsky agreement after the German invasion of Russia in 1941.

Many Poles have described their experiences, and this book is based on their reports. In some cases the accounts are given verbatim. In these prison camps, we are told, food depends on the amount of work done, and as the worker grows more weak and is able to do less work, so he receives less food. He works behind barbed wire in the world's most rigorous climate. The conditions of life among masses of people packed to suffocation in huts, verminous, with no sanitation, frost-bitten and starving, reaches a point, if these narratives are true, in which the victims almost cease to be human beings. In the hospitals, which lack most medical necessities, many doctors and nurses are skilful and humane. But in a work camp you cannot be sent to hospital until continuous high temperature proves that you are seriously ill. The author asserts that convicts cut off their own toes or fingers in the hope of being sent to hospital. For many, life only continues in these incredible conditions because of the universal system of graft. Every bit of property can be exchanged with the guards for food; the guards themselves live in terror of decreased rations if production in the camp falls. The struggle amongst half-naked people, often with putrifying sores owing to frost-bite, for any ragged clothing is such that convicts even bind wire round themselves at night to prevent their clothes being torn off them by other convicts while they sleep. Perhaps the very worst horrors occurred during the deportations themselves. The policy of moving hundreds of thousands of people in trucks across Russia was, from the Western point of view a crime, and from the Russian point of view a ghastly mistake. It appears to have been carried out with a brutality which, a few years ago, would have been regarded as impossible.

These events are described with surprisingly little passion. N.K.V.D. beatings are mentioned and evidence is given that the resistance of prisoners under interrogation is broken down by the denial of sleep in cells constantly illuminated by brilliant lights. But deliberate sadism is not the theme of this book and the author tells stories of kindly Red Army men carrying bundles for helpless old women floundering in the snow, and reminds us that the shocking cruelty she alleges takes place in a country that at the same time is developing its industry and abolishing illiteracy with unprecedented speed.

In his short introduction, T. S. Eliot rightly says that "The case here is stated: if there is a case for the other side, we will be glad to hear it." I hope some Communist, who shares the Western tradition, will respond. He could, of course, say much in reply to the last political chapter of the book which merely accepts the Polish Government's side of such controversial issues as the Katyn graves and the fall of Warsaw. But what has the British Communist to say to this haunting and terrible picture of N.K.V.D. camps? He could reply that the accounts are untrue, or that the policy is right. I find myself unable to accept either defence. No national group has told more lies than the Polish exiles during the war, but I have heard similar first-hand reports from people (not all Poles) who were not, I think, lying, and I do not believe anyone who reads this book will merely dismiss it as unauthentic. If we make allowance for exaggeration but assume that in general outline the picture is true, what is there to say? We can reply that people, like Arthur Koestler, who has made much of this aspect of Soviet life, underestimate the idealist purpose and the great achievements of the Soviet Union. That is true, but irrelevant. We can reply that these camps are only a perpetuation on a bigger scale of the system enforced under Tzarism. That again is true, but a strange defence for the Soviet Union. Our Communists, it seems to me, will be driven into saying that these means are necessary in order that the revolution may succeed in the Soviet Union and that foreign enemies may be defeated. I should reply that, on the contrary, not only has Socialism been delayed, diverted and dishonoured by these persecutions, but that nothing has done so much to raise up enemies for Russia abroad as the assumption that the foreigner in Russia is dangerous, and that Russians or foreigners who obstruct the progress of Communism have to be liquidated.

Ever since I began to think politically it has seemed clear to me that the two basic institutions of our day—nationalism and capitalism—had to give way to federalism and socialism. It was clear, too, that society would go through great convulsions and national and international wars before the new synthesis was made. The U.S.S.R. has led the way; and it is a Federation of Socialist

* *The Dark Side of the Moon*, with a preface by T. S. Eliot. (Faber, 12s. 6d.)

Republics; it has a planned economy instead of an acquisitive anarchy. Sooner or later Europe—to look no further for the moment—will find a solution of ancient national feuds and an end of poverty in the midst of potential plenty by a similar social and economic structure. In course of time the breakdown of the old society, the confusion and contradictions of Western policy and the power of the Soviet Union on the frontier will lead, in one way or another, to a federal Socialist Europe. There must be thousands who would be ready to accept Communist leadership in this future if it were not that the Asiatic ruthlessness of the U.S.S.R. is defended by Western Communists. How utterly they have lost their way! There is nothing in Marxism to justify British Marxists behaving as Soviet nationalists and no more reason why British Marxists should defend the N.K.V.D. than why members of the Church of England should justify the Spanish Inquisition. To champion the Soviet Union is their business. But it is also their business to deny that all truth finally rests in the Kremlin and to endeavour, as honest believers, to convince Moscow that Western concern about the ruthlessness of Leninism does not only come from bourgeois prejudice and that, if further world catastrophe is to be avoided, Communism must learn to respect Western tradition.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

NEW NOVELS

The Outsider. By ALBERT CAMUS. *Hamish Hamilton.* 6s.
The Pilgrim Hawk. By GLENWAY WESTCOTT. *Hamish Hamilton.* 5s.
Peggy Windsor and the American Soldier. By FRANK TILSLEY. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 9s.
Anna Collett. By BARBARA LUCAS. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 9s.
Money in the Bank. By P. G. WODEHOUSE. *Herbert Jenkins.* 8s. 6d.

Peggy Windsor is a good girl. Anna Collett is a conscientious farmer's wife, a Catholic and a linguist. In the one case it is alcohol, pity and indignation, and in the other the Italian language, which involve these two heroines in their wartime infidelities. Mr. Tilsley writes careful documentary, believes in what is called the "fundamental decency" of human beings and in the end restores Peggy Windsor to the arms of her soldier husband. Miss Lucas has, I suspect, been reading François Mauriac rather than the *Sunday Pictorial*, and Anna Collett goes out to commit suicide. Neither book is without merit. Nor is the new version of the unchanging Wodehouse. It is their common misfortune to share a publication date with two shorter novels by deliberate artists frankly occupied with the exceptional.

For it is the typicality of Mr. Tilsley and Miss Lucas and the cardboard flatness of Mr. Wodehouse which finally repel. Miss Lucas, it is true, mentions "sin," a stimulant greatly prized by Catholic novelists. But it fails to binge up the feelings as it was intended. The characters resemble persons taking damp snuff, which causes a wrinkling of the nostrils but no sneeze. And Mr. Tilsley's kindly eye, shifting curiously from the tea-shop to the brass bedstead and the Morrison shelter, finally suggests to us how much more awful the typical is than the worst about human nature.

It would take a courageous man to accuse Mr. Cyril Connolly of simplicity. And yet I wonder whether he does not treat M. Camus with a little too much reverence. The question is how much *The Outsider* owes to the American tough novel. There has been in France for some time a tendency to critical over-estimation of Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Caldwell and the rest. Gide, Malraux and Sartre are among those who have discovered, in tales of lynching and gangster warfare, philosophical depths which escape Anglo-Saxons. And *The Outsider* clearly owes its framework at least to *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Both are stories told in the first person by men condemned to death for crimes which they feel have been brought upon them by force of circumstances. The difference is that Meursault's crime is not even a crime of passion.

M. Camus's prestige has been built up here for a year and a half by means of rumour. His practice as a dramatist and writer of fiction is accompanied by philosophical activity. Mr. James M. Cain's is not. Mr. Cain tells the story of a man condemned to death. M. Camus not only does this. He also theorises about a human prototype, *le condamné à mort*. Mr. Connolly's introduction to *The Outsider* disclaims trans-Atlantic influence impatiently, as though Algeria were altogether a more significant area than the Deep South. I do not think it is, and I do not think *The Outsider* a better novel than *The Postman Always Rings Twice* or one with profounder implications. Stylistically (as it comes across in English, at any rate) it is less coherent and less brightly edged. It does not lend itself as *The Postman* did, to parody by Thurber, but erotic violence was Mr. Cain's theme and not a mere extravagance of style.

The Outsider's theme is the permanent and inexplicable foreignness of man in his world. Sartre (quoted by Mr. Connolly) states correctly that Camus is not an existentialist. Existentialism is above all a philosophy of choice and decision. M. Camus is a fatalist. His philosophy is a philosophy of the absurd. His mythical successor to the romantic Prometheus and the Freudian Oedipus is the absurd hero, Sisyphus, at his Kafkan task of pushing a stone uphill and watching it roll down the other side. Meursault's indifference, which Mr. Connolly makes a defect of sensibility in Camus himself, does not seem to me to be the point at which mythology fails M. Camus on the psychological level. Nor does the lengthy passage of Kierkegaardian reflection upon life and death. What can, I think, be seriously quarrelled with is the refusal to examine the crime itself. It was not quite so "absurd" as the author pretends. If there was no motive, there was at least provocative defiance. Even in powerful sunlight, it does not seem to me that a man with a revolver in his pocket would have returned to the scene of a recent knife-battle with no thought but that it was in the shade.

In itself, *The Outsider* is disappointing. It will be read as a partial expression of the total mind-stuff of a serious, too widely engaged artist. *The Pilgrim Hawk* will be thought precious. It is an essay on the symbolism of falconry, to which has been attached the story of two people in a Daimler visiting between lunch and dinner a French *château* owned or tenanted by Americans. The visitors are Irish and married to each other. The wife carries a hawk on her wrist. The husband hates the bird and tries unsuccessfully to kill it. The narrator, unhappily in love with his hostess, describes the hawk's mantling and bating, its feeding and its mute, meditates on its emotion in the air and compares the hunger of which a wild hawk commonly dies to the hunger of love. I found the story's ending jerky, but much of this massively brocaded detail is beyond praise, and *The Pilgrim Hawk*, should add to the considerable reputation which Mr. Westcott has already established by his earlier books.

Mr. Westcott emerges from a curious little pocket in contemporary fiction. If it were not for Francis Stuart, one would be tempted to pair off *The Pilgrim Hawk* with Kay Boyle's *The Crazy Hunter* and risk the generalisation that only an American could still find in the blood sports of the British Isles the pattern of the medieval bestiaries. Francis Stuart exists, however, and he is an Irishman, and his influence on other writers is pervasive and insufficiently proclaimed. I should be surprised to discover, for instance, that Rex Warner had not read *Pigeon Irish* before he wrote *The Aerodrome*. Politically dubious Mr. Stuart may be, and at times his writing is slipshod, but there is in his and in Mr. Westcott's and in Miss Boyle's use of symbols in fiction a vein that may yet be more profitably exploited than current literary politics have allowed us to believe.

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

PALESTINE PREJUDICES

Palestine: Problem and Promise. By ROBERT NATHAN. *Public Affairs Press.* 5 *dollars.*
Rebellion in Palestine. By JOHN MARLOWE. *Cresset Press.* 12s. 6d.
In the Perplexity of the Times. By J. L. MAGNES. *Hebrew University, Jerusalem.*
Palestine Problem. By Lt. Col. R. B. WILLIAMS-THOMPSON. *Melrose.* 12s. 6d.
Syria and Lebanon. By A. K. HOURANI. *Royal Institute of International Affairs.* 18s.
Great Britain and the Arab World. By A. K. HOURANI. *John Murray.* 1s. 6d.

Even the briefest of visits to Palestine stimulates the passions of partisanship. Everyone in Jerusalem is violently biased; and only the stupid deny it. Those who achieve a degree of impartiality do so solely by recognising their bias and discounting it. Such a rationalistic piece of self-analysis is almost impossible for either Jew or Arab or, for that matter, for any British civil servant or soldier who serves any length of time in the Middle East. Not to take sides is to remain in a state of intellectual and emotional indecision which destroys the powers both of digestion and of judgment. This is a fence on which the only equilibrium consists of a vindictive and supercilious detestation of both sides, a conviction that fairness consists in being unjust to Jew and Arab. How happy the serene self-confidence of the convinced pro-Arab, hating the Jew, whom he fears, and patronising the Arab, whom he despises! How happy, even in his isolation, that rarest of creatures, the convinced pro-Jew, black-balled from Anglo-Arab social life, constantly combating his natural anti-semitism with appeals to his rational belief in justice and humanity, and transforming his growing persecution mania into a facade of pride.

It was Mr. Robert Nathan's good fortune that he was saved from becoming either pro-Arab or pro-Jew. An American economist with a brilliant wartime record, he was sent to Palestine by the American Palestine Institute to work out a practical development plan, of which Jewish immigration should form a part. The fact that a book like *Palestine: Problem and Promise* is necessary, and that no similar inquiry has ever been attempted by the Palestine Administration, indicates the main weakness of British policy. We have been content to tolerate Jewish development and to "protect" the Arab peasants from its effects, by keeping them in their conditions of squalor and illiteracy. Never have we found it necessary or even desirable to plan the development of agriculture and industry or to shape the fiscal policy to the interests of the inhabitants. As Mr. Nathan puts it,

> When the British Treasury was dominated by the economics of Keynes, most of the senior officials of the Colonial Service were struggling for an acquaintance with the economics of Ricardo and Mill. Any broad conception of a constructive, initiating rôle for government, in economic and social development, was beyond their reach. Their economic wisdom was that of the counting house, with its pride in a neatly balanced set of books . . . That conception included no positive activity to develop agriculture or industry, and only the most meagre concern for public health, education or social security. The design of the Mandate was a Welfare State. Its reality was a nineteenth century Police State.

At this moment British and American technical experts are together studying the practical problems of Jewish immigration into Palestine. They should be given *Palestine: Problem and Promise* as compulsory reading.

Mr. Nathan reaches the conclusion that a plan of development could be instituted, at a capital cost of 475 millions, which would require the introduction of 615,000 Jewish immigrants over a period of ten years. But he emphasises that this

development and the Jewish immigration which is a part of it, are only possible on four conditions: that the Jews give up their "precipitate and unreasonable demand for a Jewish State" and work for Arab-Jewish co-operation; that Uno supports the Mandatory in the suppression of the inevitable Arab resistance to any scheme of development; that the British Administration is transformed from a Police into a Welfare State; and lastly that an effort is made at once to bridge the gap between Jewish and Arab living standards. It is not without importance that an expert American investigator reached such conclusions.

Mr. Marlowe is, I should guess, like Colonel Thompson, a British officer who, served for a relatively short time in Palestine, and so was able to retain his objectivity *vis-à-vis* the Jews, the Arabs and the Administration. Unfortunately, he has devoted just half of *Rebellion in Palestine* to a summary of history which is far better done in the Peel Report and the early chapters of *Palestine: Problem and Promise*. Then, however, he gets into his stride and the second half is the first full-length account which I have read of the Arab Revolt and of the methods which we used to suppress it. It should be studied carefully by those who believe that it is practical and wise to make disarmament in Palestine a pre-condition of further immigration. But Mr. Marlowe also has some wise advice for the Zionists, whose political stupidity he rightly castigates:

> The Zionists leant far too heavily on their influential connections in Great Britain, and these prove to be broken reeds. They did not realise that Zionism had served its main purpose as far as Great Britain was concerned by giving Great Britain the entry into Palestine. They did not see that the logical policy for Great Britain to pursue, and the policy she did in fact consistently pursue, was gradually to liquidate her obligations to Zionism, once Zionism had served its main purpose . . . they overestimated the strength of every factor in their favour, and underestimated or even ignored the strength of every factor which militated against them.

Doctor Magnes is another critic of whose warnings the extremists would be well advised to take note. President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he was the only Jew who had the courage to attack the advocates of the Jewish State in a public hearing of the Anglo-American Committee in Jerusalem. In these addresses to his university students, which he has gathered into a slim volume, he displays both the fervour and the sense of persecution by his own people, which filled the minor Hebrew prophet. In a Jerusalem where passion, dogma and intrigue are dominant, he defends the intellectual and moral conscience. Politically, no doubt, he is insignificant. That is what is wrong with Palestine politics.

Like so many Englishmen, Colonel Thompson sympathised strongly with the Zionists before he went to Palestine. The more he saw of them, the more he disliked them, and the stronger his sympathy with the Arab. His book is worth reading because it is honestly written, and therefore reveals the causes of the strongly anti-Jewish bias which most Englishmen acquire in the Middle East. Colonel Thompson, like nearly all his colleagues, is a firm believer in the White Paper and fails to see that there are any objections to it.

Mr. Hourani is a Manchester man of Syrian-Christian stock, who, with his brother Cecil, runs the Arab Propaganda Office in Jerusalem. What is quite normal among British Jews—many leading Zionists retain their British citizenship but regard themselves as members of the Jewish nation—is unusual among British Arabs. Mr. Hourani's Pan-Arabism has all the intransigence of the recent convert:

> Divided loyalties are tragic. But they are also a necessary stage in the development of thought, alike for the individual and for whole peoples: it is in the struggle to reunite the divided personality that intellect becomes mature.

In these words, Mr. Hourani brilliantly describes his own frame of mind. He is a divided personality eager to show his fellow Arabs, who do not share his understanding of the West, that he is as violent a nationalist as they are: eager to prove to his fellow Englishmen that an Arab can achieve the standards of Oxford scholarship. Though he has not the narrative power of George Antonius, his book proves that he is a competent historian. His pamphlet, *Great Britain and the Arab World*, will be of wider interest. When it was circulated as a confidential document, it achieved a certain notoriety as "the Chatham House paper on Palestine." Mr. Hourani makes no claim to impartiality, either in this pamphlet or in his book, but presents as persuasively as he can, the Arab point of view, describing the Palestine White Paper as the only possible compromise between the two Parties! The Arabs, he warns us, will turn away from the West unless we concede their claims to Pan-Arab unity and Pan-Arab independence. It is interesting to note that Mr. Hourani conceives of Arab freedom in the most abstract, political terms. In this he faithfully reflects the main weakness of Arab nationalism, which is still exclusively a middle class movement with no vital interest in the social problem of the fellahin or the industrial workers. After reading Mr. Hourani's eloquent appeal, it is interesting to turn back to Mr. Nathan and to Mr. Marlowe and remember those social and economic facts which limit the freedom of choice both of the Arab and the Jewish nationalists.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

STUART DRAMA

An Introduction to Stuart Drama. By FREDERICK S. BOAS. *Oxford University Press.* 15*s.*

The final verdict is not yet passed on our Stuart Drama. Dr. Boas recognises that "after three centuries of change in dramatic and literary standards criticism inevitably detects flaws and imperfections even in the masterpieces," yet he believes that "not only in these but in the rank and file of the plays of the period there is still a compelling attraction, whether it be in plot or characterisation, in interchange of dialogue or poetic flight." The age of Dryden preferred its own more shapely and didactic, if no less melodramatic, products. The age of Pope or of Johnson had little use even for the masterpieces; Shakespeare himself could not escape their pruning knife. Lamb rediscovered a treasury of dramatic moments in the pages of Webster, Tourneur and Ford, and by the eighteen-thirties every aspiring dramatist was trying his hand at a poetic drama derivative from the great age. George Henry Lewes, that discerning dramatic critic who had himself once fallen a victim to the fashion for blank verse tragedy, deplored the fatal influence of the old drama:

> It has fostered the tendency and flattered the weakness of the poets, by encouraging them to believe that mere writing suffices for a drama—that imagery will supply the place of incidents, and that tragic intentions which boldly appeal to the imagination are enough.

He counts it among the pardonable errors of his youth that he once thought our old English dramatists worthy of study, and by 1850 he knows that these plays are:

> As poor in construction as they are resplendent in imagery and weighty lines—that their characters are sketched rather than developed—that their situations for the most part are violent, horrible and clumsily prepared, and that besides being wearisome in reading, they are essentially unfit for the modern stage.

William Archer reiterated and elaborated the indictment. And yet a few of these uncouth

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productions still hold the stage to-day, and those who saw the recent revival of *The Duchess of Malfi* know that it can still provide an enthralling entertainment. Webster's "resplendent imagery and weighty lines" can illuminate the dark places of the human soul. There are a few masterpieces of the Stuart Age, notably Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and Webster's own *The White Devil*, which have the same power. But even these masterpieces have only the imprint of unforgettable moments; the characters are impelled by a "motiveless malignity" or a consuming passion; the sequence of events is incoherent and the dramatist's moral values, when they clearly emerge, apply solely to the world into which we have been beguiled by the play. Shakespeare remains our only great tragic dramatist.

Dr. Boas does not seriously raise the question of the worth of Stuart Drama, he is content to assume it and to write an historical introduction to this prolific period. He addresses his book "to those who are interested in Stuart drama without being professed scholars," and for them he provides a useful map of this bewildering country by sketching the history of the theatres and their providers from 1603 to 1613; from 1613 to 1625 and from 1625 to 1642, with Sir William Davenart bridging the gap between the closing of the theatres and their reopening at the Restoration. Besides this helpful indication of a time sequence he draws attention to a division into kinds such as *masks and entertainments*, *tragedies of melancholy* (associated with the publication in 1625 of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*), *Revenge Tragedies*, *Romantic and Chronicle-History Plays* and *Dramas of Sex Complications*. These are some of his chapter-sub-headings, but it is difficult in practice to observe a boundary line between the kinds; each chapter is devoted to one or more of the dramatists, and most of them in fact wrote plays of several and of mixed kinds. The prevalent lack of a central tragic idea in the dramatist's mind makes classification difficult and often arbitrary. The plays were written, for the most part, to satisfy an audience greedy for excitement and horrors; revenge, sexual passion and melancholy were favourable themes from which to elicit these, and they were exploited by all alike. But, although the classification breaks down and the material is not responsive to the orderly arrangement of the literary historian, yet Dr. Boas's serene marshalling of the playwrights gives the reader a foothold and so encourages exploration. After summarising what is known of the biography of each playwright, Dr. Boas outlines the plots of the plays with copious and excellently chosen exerpts from the most moving scenes. Most of the plots seem little less incoherent when summarised than when we attempt to follow them in the text or on the stage, the lack of a clear central theme or of any organic unity is usually apparent. But here again Dr. Boas is untroubled by all this, he can speak of Webster's "superb, relentless consistency of delineation" in *The White Devil* without doubts and can wonder, with regard to Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*, "how far the sympathies of the Phoenix audience responded to this remarkable instance of confusing moral values" as though he had not noticed that they must have been used to such confusion. This detached acceptance of the plays as they are, without judging them or measuring them against the real masterpieces of tragedy is a limitation of his book; but it does not prevent it from being a valuable introduction to the subject.

The most serious defect of the book as an introduction is the inadequacy of its bibliographical material. Such bibliography as there is occurs in footnotes and is therefore not easily available; moreover, inexperienced students would not be so familiar with the learned periodicals as to recognise the initials P.M.L.A. and R.E.S. to which they are from time to time referred. It is also a notable omission that there is nowhere any mention either of Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Elizabethan Essays*, the most influential current criticism on this subject, or of Virginia Woolf's illuminating essay in *The Common Reader*, "Notes on an Elizabethan play." As Dr. Boas's book has many of the virtues of a *vade mecum* for inexperienced travellers a select bibliography of criticism would be a valuable addition to it. One must not, in these days, complain of the poor quality of the paper and printing; but the frequent occurrence of misprints is unworthy of the Oxford University Press; two of these mar the metre and the sense of quotations (on pages 200 and 244) on the other hand "*plantonic* love" and Webster's "*dialectrical* mastery" set in motion undercurrents of meaning which afford an unintended delight. JOAN BENNETT

ST. TERESA

Mother of Carmel. By E. ALLISON PEERS. *Student Christian Movement Press.* 8s. 6d.

Professor Peers rightly remarks in his foreword that it would have been far easier to write a large biography of St. Teresa of Avila than a small one. The result of his attempt is a somewhat unexpected book from so unquestioned an authority, for it is neither quite one thing nor the other. It is not, and does not set out to be, the monumental Life of great scholarship which Professor Peers could have written had he been so minded; it is merely an accurate and simplified account, perfectly *honorable*, and a reliable guide for the ordinary reader. The early years are considerably foreshortened; innumerable incidents, later on, are eliminated or very briefly referred to; four whole chapters are given to an estimate of the saint's own writings; and one chapter to her personality and sanctity. It has been Professor Peers's avowed intention to send readers to the fountain-head in her books and letters, and with that end in view he has endeavoured to rouse interest in this great reformer, this Mother of Carmel, so maternal yet so virile, so charming in spite of her "rugged Castilian temperament," whose mission in life was "less to found Carmelite convents than to help millions everywhere to live the life of prayer."

But the ordinary reader, since it is for him that the book is expressly written, is entitled to ask whether, assuming that he here approaches the saint for the first time with no other introduction, he will indeed be presented with a portrait-sketch sufficiently living to send him, with his curiosity aroused, in search of those profound mystical works *The Interior Castle* and *The Way of Perfection*, or even of the easier *Life* and the humanly, historically delightful *Foundations*. The answer cannot be wholeheartedly affirmative. Dare we suggest that the ideal biographer must also have a touch of the novelist in him? not to falsify, not even to prevaricate, certainly not to force the portrait into conformity with his own desires, but to sharpen the features with strong lines, brilliant and unforgettable. Professor Peers is rather too severe with himself, and consequently with us. Yet St. Teresa, so definite, and so lavish with the documentary material she has bequeathed to us, should not be difficult to portray; she should be honey to the biographer with any nice sense of selection. One cannot accuse Professor Peers of wholly lacking this quality, but for some reason he does not quite succeed in clothing the bones: they remain dry. Has he been inhibited in some way from freely releasing his enthusiasm and thus limiting it to the colder thing which is admiration? In *Spirit of Flame*, his earlier study of St. John of the Cross, he surely wrote with greater warmth, and

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it would seem as though he now repented of the occasional picturesqueness into which he then allowed himself to lapse:

> Teresa, the woman of fifty-two, her face lined by ill-health and austere discipline, but her humorous, sensitive mouth and her keen, twinkling eyes testifying to her shrewdness and understanding of human nature. Fray Antonio, a man of fifty-seven, tall, finely set up . . . Fray John, a diminutive boyish figure of five feet two inches, with the high forehead of the intellectual, the quiet, self-possessed mien of the man of character, the far-away expression of the visionary and the unfaltering and penetrating gaze of the mystic. "Now I have a friar and a half to begin the Reform with!" cried Teresa in delight when she rejoined her companions.

Nevertheless, the reader seeking a trustworthy introduction to Teresa of Jesus will find no better short study, and although he may not be carried away by Professor Peers, he can at least be sure that he will never be misled.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

LIFE IN THE FAR EAST

A Daughter of Han. By IDA PRUITT. *Yale.* 18*s.* 6*d.*

A Japanese Village. By JOHN F. EMBREE. *Kegan Paul.* 18*s.*

Neither of these books is a novel, and yet how much of the specific novel-reading pleasure, that of getting inside a life different from one's own and establishing kinship with it, they contrive to give. How much better, indeed, they give it than any novel would be likely to do. I had a feeling of glum resistance in opening *A Daughter of Han* and seeing the picturesque descriptions in the introduction; this is bound to be like a novel, I thought. But no, when one got to the monologue it was just what the old woman had told Ida Pruitt; and this has immense interest; you are to make deductions about the speaker, not merely let the author manipulate your feelings. The variety of misfortune in the life of Mrs. Ning might indeed have been plotted by a novelist; it gives her a very full cross-section of the life of P'englai, as small trader, as beggar, as servant to ruling mandarins and to early missionaries, as grandmother of a Chinese woman who studied in America and joined the guerrillas against the Japanese. But it does not feel like a plot and indeed she does not seem much struck by the variety. She kept with her "old opium sot" (the husband) because she gathered that one man was as bad as another; it is one of the grimmest passages in a stark book. The dissolute mandarins seem, in retrospect, not unlike the European missionary ladies; both types of employer make noisy scenes, are capricious, obstinate, fantastic, and treat her alternately with injustice and with warm candour. Her own violence is at home with theirs; in fact a powerful temperament colours everything that happens to her. It makes a most informing book.

The *Japanese Village* does not even threaten to be a novel; it is Science, a field survey of a piece of Japanese countryside. This technique has to be verbose because it sets out to give all the information that might be wanted later; indeed it was invented to record primitive societies which were rapidly dissolving on contact with the modern world. The method seems rather otiose when applied to the sturdy villages of Japan; but eventually there may be a theory which can only be tested by turning to the careful maps showing the position of each farm in 1936, or the huge tables showing the proportion of income spent by (say) an upland poor farmer on (say) pickles. There is such a glut of information that you could as it were explore the hamlet yourself. You have in any case the close-ups of the procedure at the frequent drinking-parties (already not what they had been) and the delightful verbatim texts of pep-talks by the headman and the schoolmaster to encourage taxpaying and of a Buddhist funeral sermon. People often said during the war that Japanese atrocities must be committed by country louts, not by the civilised Japanese of the towns. The book may be a bit too Arcadian, but it seems clear that these farmers would need indoctrinating by the townsmen before they were barbarous or even neurotic. You feel (anyway) that you are really getting somewhere with all this information, as no novel about Japan would ever make you do.

To push the claim so far makes it clearly false. A novelist who has lived wholly within the society described (Lady Murasaki, for instance) can give much more of the truth about it than reporting or a field survey. What strikes such a chill is the use of novel technique to dish up a more external sort of knowledge in predigested form. Both these authors, of course, to make a good job of it, had to have a full knowledge by sympathy, not merely by fact, of the societies they describe; they seem fully equipped to write novels about them. It is the more striking that one feels so thankful for the flat path of truth.

W. EMPSON

HOW TO LOOK AT PICTURES

Painting and Painters. By LIONELLO VENTURI. *Scribner's.* 21*s.*

When people tell you they know what they like, all they mean is that they like what they know, and since their knowledge of pictures is restricted to what is most readily accessible, to Medici prints and Christmas numbers of the illustrated papers, they like very little. If they were to combine a close study of this book with occasional visits to the National Gallery, they would be surprised to find their tastes changing and their perceptions sharpened. For Dr. Lionello Venturi caters not for scholars who will be familiar with his arguments, but for an uninformed public that is also open-minded. "How to look at a picture—from Giotto to Chagall" is the subtitle of his book. Far from wishing to sketch a panorama of European painting from Giotto to Chagall, Dr. Venturi prefers to teach a few general principles by presenting a series of close-up views of masterpieces from the thirteenth century to the present day. No one must expect to pick up much information from these pages. He omits all but the most essential facts; he is indifferent to chronology. Ingres and Puvis de Chavannes are discussed before Michelangelo or Giorgione. Whereas some worthless painters are introduced to act as scapegoats, others, among the greatest masters, are not even mentioned. Five pages are devoted to Meissonier and Bouguereau, but the names of Giovanni Bellini, Rubens, Vermeer and Watteau do not appear. Any approach to painting is bound, at the present stage of our understanding, to be one-sided and fragmentary, and like all systems Dr. Venturi's has its merits and its drawbacks. On the one hand, he brings us into very intimate touch with the personality of each painter; on the other hand, we are left with no sense of historical continuity, nor any answer to the urgent question, why for centuries men and women should have bothered to apply particles of colour to wood or canvas.

Dr. Venturi is not satisfied by the argument: "this is good, that is bad, if you cannot see it you must be blind." He knows only too well that a mere affirmation of personal taste does not help anybody to strike contact with a work of art. He believes that even if we still grope in the darkness towards it, there must exist somewhere an objective standard of value against which each picture can be measured. It is

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